FALL BOOKS

THE NATION

NOVEMBER 18, 1961 . . 25c

THE NOVEL in AMERICA

HEMINGWAY

Nelson Algren

QUEST WITHOUT FAITH
Joseph Waldmeir

FOUR WAR NOVELS
Melvin Seiden

THE AVANT-GARDE
Ihab Hassan

THE 'WESTERN' MYTH
John Williams

Other ESSAYS and REVIEWS by

Terry Southern **Kenneth Rexroth**

Jean Martin **Saul Maloff**

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LETTERS

'JUGGERNAUT'

Nation readers are an ingenious lot. One of the interesting aspects of the flood of mail we have received about "JUGGERNAUT: The Warfare State" is the desire revealed by the correspondents to get the issue read by others — and the diverse methods used, or suggested, to this end. Following are a few samples. — EDITORS

Dear Sirs: You may be interested to know that I propose to sell "JUGGERNAUT" on Hollywood Boulevard. . . . I haven't done this sort of thing since the fight for suffrage . . . and sold the *Woman Voter* on the streets of New York.
Burbank, Calif. FRANCES DUNCAN

Dear Sirs: I am enclosing check for $125 for 500 copies of "JUGGERNAUT." I would like 100 copies sent to me, and the balance to people or groups where it may have some beneficial influence. I leave this to your best judgment. . . .
ERNEST J. SNEIDMAN
Honolulu, Hawaii

[*Mr. Sneidman's extra remittance, along with similar remittances from other generous readers, will finance distribution of "JUGGERNAUT" to neighborhood, campus and other small groups with agendas that are bigger than their treasuries.*—EDITORS]

Dear Sirs: "JUGGERNAUT" is the sort of thing that only *The Nation* and one or two other publications are sufficiently independent to tackle. We are letting our own readers know in our columns what you have done. HOUSTOUN WARING
Editor, Littleton *Independent*
Littleton, Colo.

Dear Sirs: Enclosed find check for which please send me ten copies of "JUGGERNAUT." I wish to make them almost required reading in classes on educational theory. ERNEST J. BAYLES
Professor of Education
Lawrence, Kan. University of Kansas

Dear Sirs: Has anyone thought of sending copies of "JUGGERNAUT" in place of holiday greetings this year? A somber idea, but not so if it would help insure the existence of succeeding holidays.
Ann Arbor, Mich. RICHARD J. LEVY

Dear Sirs: Once again, with "JUGGERNAUT," *The Nation* and Fred J. Cook have distinguished themselves with political reportage of the greatest pertinence and importance. I'm sure all of your readership will respond by giving the issue the widest possible circulation.
Los Angeles, Calif. JOHN BRIGHT

[*Orders for "JUGGERNAUT" should be addressed to* The Nation *at 333 Sixth Ave., New York 14. Enclose payment with order at the following rates: Single copy, 50c; 10 copies for $4; 50 for $17.50; 100 for $30; 500 for $125.*]

And Some Challenges

Dear Sirs: "JUGGERNAUT" is terrific in every way. . . . A technical point, however: Mr. Cook cites Dr. Teller as saying that warheads, through testing, might be reduced from a weight of 200 tons to 35 tons per megaton of yield. While weights per megaton of yield are classified, available evidence indicates that the ratio is about 0.5 ton per megaton. CARL DREHER
Brewster, N. Y.

Dear Sirs: In Fred J. Cook's "JUGGERNAUT: The Warfare State," a paragraph on biological warfare (p. 291) contains several misstatements. The context suggests 1947-1948. During that time no "report of the Army Research Board on biological warfare" was published by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A report on this subject made by George W. Merck to the Secretary of War was released to the press by the War Department on January 3, 1946. It made no mention of radioactive dust and said nothing about "killing all the people in [our cities]." Nor is it true that "at the same time, at the request of the same Joint Chiefs, a Harvard University expert published a treatise on bacteriological warfare in which he demonstrated that germ warfare would be more deadly than the atom bomb." There was no such report. What happened was that in May, 1947, a report on bacteriological warfare written in 1942 by two members of the faculty of Columbia University (I was one of them), and kept secret during the war, was published by its authors without any urging from any source. Moreover, this report did not demonstrate, nor has anybody ever demonstrated, that germ warfare would be more deadly than the atom bomb. THEODOR ROSEBURY
Professor of Bacteriology
St. Louis, Mo. Washington University

CORRECTION

In an editorial in our issue of Nov. 4 on the press coverage of the anti-Communist rally in the Hollywood Bowl, we erroneously stated that *Newsweek* had failed to mention the sponsors of the three-hour network telecast. Our apologies to *Newsweek* and, in passing, our congratulations on *Newsweek's* account of the shelter program in its Nov. 6 issue—a refreshing note of realism in the mass media on a vital subject.—EDITORS.

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NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1961
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THE NATION

EDITORIALS

The Rising Cry of Protest

The despair and apathy which paralyzed many sensible citizens when the nuclear-test negotiations broke down is giving way to resolute resistance. "The Women Protest" is the *Newsweek* (November 13) headline. "They were perfectly ordinary-looking young women, with their share of good looks," *Newsweek* reports. "They looked like the women you would see driving ranch wagons, or shopping at the village market, or attending PTA meetings. It was these women, by the thousands, who staged demonstrations in a score of cities across the nation last week, protesting atomic testing. A 'strike for peace,' they called it and — carrying placards, many wheeling baby buggies or strollers — they marched on city hall and federal buildings to show their concern about nuclear fallout."

But, *Newsweek* wrote, it is unlikely that the President can long maintain the "hard-soft" balance of his press announcement of the previous week, in which he declared that the United States will not resume tests in the atmosphere immediately, but that if our evaluation of Soviet tests led to the conclusion that they had made advances in nuclear technology, the United States would resume testing in the atmosphere to maintain "our nuclear superiority."

Time was more hard-boiled. Referring to world-wide condemnation of tests, particularly by neutrals, it said the United States may be pardoned for feeling that "this transitory expression of world opinion — including new Afro-Asian adjectives — is less important than its own security and the future of freedom everywhere in the free world."

Just how the conclusion is reached that a nuclear war will preserve the security of the United States, much less its freedom, remains obscure, but the rising cry of protest is encouraging. It is, in fact, our best hope. The danger is that it will mount to a crescendo during or shortly after the Russian test series, and then continue *sotto voce* when *we* begin poisoning the atmosphere.

The politicians in this country welcome the present demonstrations; what they are afraid of is that they may not be turned off at the right time. When 2,000 California women gathered at Los Angeles Civic Center bearing placards reading, "Choose peace while there is a choice," and "End the arms race and not the human race," Mayor Samuel Yorty cautioned them "to direct your anger toward the proper target." Moscow, but never Washington.

Yet there is not the slightest excuse for the resumption of testing by the United States, even if the protests of the neutrals are dismissed as "transitory." Even on the basis of the security-by-suicide theory, we are in good shape. The President expressed his confidence "that we have many times more power than any nation on earth and that these capabilities are deployed so as to survive any attack. . . ." Secretary of Defense McNamara told *Newsweek*: "I believe we have nuclear power several times that of the Soviets. This nation is strong." The demonstrators should keep reminding Washington of these words until Washington begins to credit its own pronouncements.

The Elections

The United States, heaven knows, has its share of political dopes and screwballs, and our democracy is so imperfectly practiced that its true lovers must wonder, in bad moments, whether it is not more of a catchword than a reality. Yet, surveying the results of the last election and the one before the last, one does not need a microscope to find in the democratic process the cumulative good sense of a vast number of quite ordinary Americans.

One lesson is that a big political figure cannot be rung in, like a movie star at a preview, with sure-fire effect. Some of the voters may come out to shake hands and get into the television pictures, but in the polling booth other forces come into play. If General Eisenhower did not know this before, he knows it now. The people like him as much as ever, no doubt, but they don't do what he says they should do that the country may be saved. One reason he was liked, while he was President, was that he was probably the least partisan of all thirty-five American Presidents. He gave the impression that it was the United States he was concerned about, and not the pomp and spoils of office. But then, becoming bored with the blooded stock and gentlemanly farming of Gettysburg, he stepped out of his role and made partisan speeches in a mayoralty race (New York), a

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gubernatorial race (New Jersey) and a Congressional race (in Texas), and in each instance his candidate was defeated. Two of them, in fact, received a cruel shellacking.

But in one respect, at least, General Eisenhower's intervention may have been useful. For it appears to have overcome President Kennedy's reluctance to come to the aid of Democratic nominees. A President, we are told, must avoid putting his prestige "on the line" in local or Congressional elections. But under our system a President, for better or worse, is the political leader of his party; his prestige, in a sense, is always on the line. Ex-Presidents, on the other hand, cease to be party leaders from the moment they leave the White House; no one knows it better than the voters. President Kennedy's perfunctory support of Mayor Wagner was obviously not a major influence in the Democratic victory in New York; but his unqualified support of Richard J. Hughes in New Jersey, and strong Administration support of Henry Gonzalez in Texas, may have been decisive. The response of the voters in these elections should encourage the President to exert a still bolder political leadership of his party in the future.

Jams and Jams

Even such a hardheaded lady as the Hon. Clare Boothe Luce subscribes to the theory that we are in a jam. No doubt we are, but what about the Russians?

Chou En-lai walks out on the great party Congress just concluded and Khrushchev, who must feel about as good at this development as a boxer who has just taken a haymaker in the solar plexus, must accompany him to the airport to show that Communist solidarity is unimpaired. Albania thumbs its little nose at the Soviet colossus and is backed up by the disaffected Chinese colossus, which promises military aid to the Albanian orphan, if necessary. (By what means is unspecified, but then Khrushchev has not spelled out how he would shield Cuba against the Yankee colossus if Castro calls for succor.)

Now to keep the East Germans full of strength through joy, Big Comrade finds it necessary to build a wall against their one-way vacation trips to the capitalist abominations of West Germany. With a heavy heart, Big Comrade has resumed nuclear testing, and has reaped a storm of execration which makes the 1938 uproar over "Little Finland" and the subsequent Nazi-Soviet pact sound feeble. To show his internal critics that he means business, Big Comrade has shoved ex-Big Comrade from his bier next to Lenin's into a medium-grade place of honor beside the Kremlin wall. And when eighty-year-old Marshal and former President Klimenti Y. Voroshilov, having beaten his breast in shame, tries to join Big Comrade on the reviewing stand for the big parade, the guards give him the bum's rush, which is somewhat as if President Kennedy had Robert Frost thrown into the Potomac in midwinter.

No, statesmen have their troubles (many self-inflicted) but life is easier at the top levels of the Washington hierarchy than where the Volga flows.

Join Up or Else

As originally conceived, civil defense was to be an instrument for preserving life and restoring law and order in the event of disaster. This was its role in World War II, where fortunately it was never called on to go into action. Later, its chief selling point was that if we were spared a nuclear war, a civil-defense organization would still be necessary to cope with floods, fires, earthquakes and other natural calamities.

But now, with the panic-peddlers whooping it up, civil defense is being transformed into an instrument of witch-hunting at the grass roots, where neighborhood McCarthys can indulge their manias to their hearts' content. As the frenzy rises, the chief task of the civil-defense administrators will shift from persuading people to build fallout shelters — which in the event of a nuclear attack will in any case benefit only a small minority — to curbing the lunatic fringe in the state and town civil-defense groups.

One place which urgently needs such attention is Nutley, New Jersey, a heretofore innocuous suburb of New York City. The Nutley Civil Defense and Disaster Control Organization, through the local Boy Scouts, recently distributed to every home in the town a leaflet which declared that

> . . . This disease [Russian and Chinese communism] must be wiped from the face of the earth . . . the Civil Defense Organization is the most obvious and most opportune instrument for recording each individual's committed stand on the question of appeasement or resistance to active, Party-Line Communism. It is highly important that each citizen participate actively in the Civil Defense Organization, now. Every loyal, true American should stand at the side of his neighbor wearing an arm band of the Civilian Defense Corps, pledged to support and uphold the Constitution and the principles upon which our freedom rests. There can be no equivocation. Either you belong now — committed to your nation's defense — or you do not belong, and so stand "uncommitted." Today, no commitment in this matter is an open invitation to Party-Line Communist penetration.

Either you sign up, or you are a Communist — or, at the very least, a sympathizer. An enlistment application is appended. Age groups begin at ten and run on up to seventy. Only one thing is lacking: a posse to round up any old-fashioned Americans left in Nutley who cherish an ancestral resentment of coercive threats and strong-arm tactics applied by agencies set up under the color, at least, of Constitutional authority.

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THE NOVEL in AMERICA

Hemingway: The Dye That Did Not Run

Nelson Algren

> *What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well.*

HAD Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair died on the same day as Ernest Hemingway, it would have been difficult to distinguish her work, through Chicago observers, from his.

"Hemingway's prose was chaste as a mountain stream," one follower of field and stream ventured boldly about a style that had as little to do with chastity as the man who mastered it; thank God.

"He was dedicated to Truth and Beauty," another venerable sniffler paid his respects. Had Hemingway heard himself so described he would have referred the entire matter to his "built-in shock-proof shit-detector." (*Paris Review*, Spring, 1958.)

Neither his life nor his style—for his style was his life—fitted the formality that literature must be suited to maiden eyes and ears even when, behind a critic's specs, the eyes belonged to a maiden mind. The style is the man and Hemingway's was not achieved in pursuit of an award for good writing bestowed by Martha Foley.

It was the development of a personality's real need; and the need was for light and simplicity. In touching multitudes enduring a murky complexity he therefore touched them religiously.

It was always raining in his tales, which were read beneath leak-proofed roofs in clean, well-insured rooms. The risks he took were most meaningful to those who took no risks at all.

The death of Catherine Barkley troubled the woman counting her tic-tac hours down lest no tragic hour strike for her. He made her sensible of a fear that she who guards herself too well against the tragic in life may lose her life untragically in the guarding.

He made the man who could follow him no farther than his own well-lit door, feel, standing in it, the dark precipitous edge where life drops in one moment to utter nothingness. As though a man must earn his death before he could win his life.

No American writer since Walt Whitman has assumed such risks in forging a style, and the success of these risks was not accidental. For they were risks assumed in living, and thereby derived a tension that no merely literary risk could have achieved.

They were not amateur's chances, such as that proposed by one of the beatnik saints in assuming that writing resembles driving with headlights out and a noseful of pot.[1] The chances Hemingway took were professional, being measured, and were then governed by an iron control. They were the kind of chances by which, should they fail, the taker fails alone; yet should they succeed, succeed for everyone.

They succeeded because within the iron, passion lived. And a singular tension was derived by his control of this passion.

A tension which *fixed* his scenes. In them life—or death— was arrested as in a still photograph wherein the same scene went on forever:

> They shot the six cabinet ministers at half-past six in the morning against the wall of a hospital. There were pools of water in the courtyard. . . . One of the ministers was sick with typhoid. Two soldiers carried him downstairs and out into the rain. They tried to hold him up against the wall but he sat down in a puddle of water. The other five stood very quietly against the wall. Finally the officer told the soldiers it was no good trying to make him stand up. When they fired the first volley, he was sitting down in the water with his head on his knees.

Tension was so magically woven into his writing, the art was so hidden, that its effect upon other writers became catastrophic. To out-Hemingway Hemingway seemed no trick at all: one had only to say it tough and economize on words. But when the tension was missing the magic was missing: indeed, the man was missing. So that the attempt at emulation left the reader with nothing but an inadvertent self-revelation by the emulator.[2]

His need of living having become one with his need of writing, his commitment was total: it went full length. And its length was the length of his life.

Under the perfect control was always the violence of pride; like that of the ancestral Hebrew prophet who turned a dry place into a wellspring. Hemingway's dry place was a stillborn wasteland of real-estate horrors to which Booth Tarkington was then subscribing (in *The Midlander*), but which left Sherwood Anderson dismayed:

> Thinking of money and Success as a bitch and my fellow Americans as having the scent of her long since, they trotting at her heels, that peculiar look in the eyes, that look of humiliation not real, hope not real. The bitch was trotting the South. She had long since invaded the Midwest.

Thus Hemingway arrived at his young manhood dead-center into "the smiling side of American life" at a moment when the smile was turning to a piggy-bank smirk. For Europe's armies were buying while we were selling, and America's sweetheart kept singing —

> *My sweetheart's the man in the moon*
> *I'm going to vis-it him soon*

Yet under the roar of the ball-park crowds with the Sunday sun striped down them, one sportswriter heard cries for help from under the stands; that set him laughing strangely going home from the park. It wasn't among the Mid-Americans of the Left Bank, but to a Hoosier sportswriter who never got out of the park, that Hemingway's spiritual predicament was closest.

Ring Lardner, in a self-mocking mock-biography, reported himself as a radio enthusiast who had designed his own set:

> At first he was unable to get any station at all and his condition held good to the day of his death. But he was always trying to tune in on Glen Falls, New York, and it was not until his last illness that he learned there was no broadcasting station in that place.

He had heard the cries. He had dis-

NELSON ALGREN is completing Who Lost an American?, *a report on Europe to be published by Macmillan.*

[1] *Essentials of Spontaneous Prose*. By Jack Kerouac.

[2] *Something of Value*. By Robert Ruark.

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cerned the myths. There was nothing wrong with his set. Yet he took his disappointment too big. Lardner mistook the failure of American life for his own: there was no station at Glen Falls. He could not obliterate the cries, so he obliterated himself.

For Hemingway, there was no station in America. But he knew that the failure was not his own. At the moment that Lardner's set went dead, his began to work.

His journey did not stop at the close of the 1920s as James T. Farrell suggests in a recent piece defining Hemingway as "basically a writer of the twenties" (*Nugget*, December, 1961). "In Hemingway we have the artist who starts with Lardner's conclusion," Maxwell Geismar perceives more clearly (*Writers in Perspective*). Because it was not until the decade of the thirties that the man who had consciously refused to have any further part of Western civilization came home to the company of men. And became the clearest voice of the American conscience.

THE America of Mark Twain had been one of hard times on the river and hard times in town. But Hemingway's was one in which the reduction of life to a cart-race in a supermart had already begun.

The political isolationism of the Middle West derived from a passion for personal security that reflected a divorcement from life so wide that it feigned innocence of the rim where all men drop into black nothingness.

> What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well.

By the time that the young men whose pasts were so promising began to arrive in Paris, Hemingway had already been to Death and back:

> As they [The Spanish] have common sense they are interested in death and do not spend their lives avoiding it and hoping it does not exist, to realize it only when they come to die.

And if a preoccupation with death was The Spanish Disease, what then was the name of The American Affliction? That one of which William Campbell, in the story called "A Pursuit Race," lay abed in a Kansas City hotel?

> "I don't want to take a cure," William Campbell said. "I don't want to take a cure at all. I am perfectly happy. All my life I have been perfectly happy."
>
> "How long have you been stewed, Billy?"
>
> "Listen, you think I'm drunk."
>
> "You *are* drunk."
>
> "No, I'm not."
>
> "You're drunk and you've had D.T.s."
>
> "Take a look." William Campbell pulled up the right sleeve of his pyjama jacket under the sheet, then shoved the right forearm out. "Look at that." On the forearm, from just above the wrist to the elbow, were small blue circles around tiny dark blue punctures. The circles almost touched one another.
>
> "They got a cure for that."
>
> "No," William Campbell said. "They haven't got a cure for anything."

Nobody had a cure for anything.

This was not so simple a story as that of a man who had extended his arm permissively simply because an arm that has no particular use doesn't flinch from being used by a hype. It was not a story about an untouchable, but about an unreachable. Taken in the context of Hemingway's work, the affliction for which nobody had a cure was spiritual isolation.

An isolation that might lead, as well by bird-watching as by heroin, into a nothingness that was one face of death.

A WITHDRAWAL from experience as a consequence of war is also pointed up in "Soldier's Home," the story of Krebs, a youth returned from overseas service in World War I:

> "Don't look that way, Harold," his mother said. "You know we love you and I want to tell you for your own good how matters stand. Your father does not want to hamper your freedom. He thinks you should be allowed to drive the car. If you want to take some of the nice girls out riding with you, we are only too pleased. We want you to enjoy yourself. But you are going to have to settle down to work, Harold. Your father doesn't care what you start in at. All work is honorable as he says. But you've got to make a start at something. He asked me to speak to you this morning and then you can stop in and see him at his office."
>
> "Is that all?" Krebs said.
>
> "Yes. Don't you love your mother, dear boy?"
>
> "No," Krebs said.
>
> His mother looked at him across the table. Her eyes were shiny. She started crying.
>
> "I don't love anybody," Krebs said.

It was because he himself shared the sense of loss in Krebs that Hemingway was able to put the Biblical warning, that he who gains the world loses himself, into terms usable by modern man:

> If you serve time for society, democracy, and the other things quite young, and declining any further enlistment make yourself responsible only to yourself, you exchange the pleasant, comforting stench of comrades for something you can never feel in any other way than by yourself . . . and the palm fronds of our victories, the worn light bulbs of our discoveries and the empty condoms of our great loves float with no significance against one single, lasting thing—the stream.

". . . and . . . make yourself responsible only to yourself"—now the set really began to work. He had looked over the big dark edge and understood that against nothingness man is saved by nothing but love of man. He had written that

> . . . it is easier to keep well in a good country by taking simple precautions

The Man-Rock

A man is a rock in a garden of chairs and waits for a long time to be over.

It is easier for a rock in a garden than a man inside his mother. He decided to be a rock when he got outside.

A rock asks only what is a rock.

A rock waits to be a rock.

A rock is a longtime waiting for a longtime to be over so that it may turn and go the other way.

A rock awakens into a man. A man looks. A man sleeps back into a rock as it is better for a rock in a garden than a man inside himself trembling in red darkness.

Russell Edson

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than to pretend that a country which is finished is still a good country. Our people went to America because that was the place to go then. It had been a good country and we had made a bloody mess of it and I would go, now, somewhere else and as we had always gone. You could always come back. Let the others come to America who did not know they had come too late. Our people had seen it at its best and fought for it when it was still worth fighting for. Now I would go somewhere else. We always went in the old days and there were still good places to go.

And declining either to wrestle the bitch goddess to earth, to protest the new technology by lying down on the tracks as had Vachel Lindsay; and further declining to enlist among rear-echelon radicals, Hemingway severed himself deliberately from all that had gone before.

Yet, out of the most remote isolation from the experience of his times, he returned home. He did come home again: to the center of the human conscience.

When fascism became an open and imminent personal threat, the chief question raised by those who had been most severe in condemnation of him was "What's going to happen to *me*?" And did not wait for an answer, but saved themselves instead.

It was Hemingway who risked the ship. His voice was that one which lifted the chief question to "What is going to happen to men?"

It may here be pointed out to me that he was not alone in representing American liberalism in the thirties and this is more than true, because he never merely represented. As he had not been merely a writer formed by the disillusionment following the First World War, now he was not merely a prophet of World War II among other prophets. He was not "basically of" either decade. For to both decades he brought a magic hue: a dye that did not run. For its singular color was the color of a singular life. And there let the mystery lie.

Between "Hail nothing full of nothing nothing is with thee—it was all a nothing and a man was nothing too" and "each man's death diminishes me" he had completed a spiritual voyage which still sustains us.

That he had ultimately to fail, that in the end it would be nothingness once more, he must have known. But he also knew that the point is to last.

And last he did.

Literature is made upon any occasion that a challenge is put to the legal apparatus by a conscience in touch with humanity.

In "I play not marches for accepted victors only, I play marches for conquered and slain persons. I will not have a single person slighted or left away," Walt Whitman set the tune.

But marches for the conquered proved not enough. From Stephen Crane through Hemingway, the prevailing passion of American letters became assault upon the legal apparatus in the name of humanity. Commonly by a single driven man.

YET the close of World War II saw those writers who had most courageously sustained this passion either in flight or gone passionless.

After the final bivouac of that war, its final sea-bell and the last bar, I returned to find the big Milwaukee Avenue moon of home still working nights above the same breweries.

Yet strangely changed, burning at once both darker and more bright. For fluorescent neon now lit names of brands never heard of before in any bar. Some of the drinkers had been to the war, some had sat it out. Yet all were equally survivors.

The direct impact of changes past, of depression and of war had formed them, years before, into first-person persons. Now they felt themselves to be survivors merely; in a world gone third-person.

Yet clung to their first-person feelings as they held to the prewar brands of beer. When a card dealer told a new player, "Count your money," the young man answered, "No. But I'll review my holdings." Dealers and drinkers did not know how to talk to the newcomers; who soon became the new dealers. *They* did not bother with drinking.

These new owners appeared from somewhere where it had all been too easy: where life was guarded, from nursery to campus, against love and rough weather. On the day a new owner's name appeared beside his father's on an office door, he stood in contempt of those with no frosted-glass name.

Then old wall mottoes had to come down—"Who degrades another degrades me." "There shall be no difference between them and the rest." "The kept-woman, sponger, thief, are hereby invited"—these were mottoes made of hard times on the river and hard times in town, so nobody needed them now. "You can't be too careful" was the trend of the new mottoes.

And careful the newcomers were. Because, while their protagonists called for more courage from everyone, higher morality and more idealism, they all settled privately, and some too soon, for personal security — usually suburban.

Thus the hard-bought American belief that literature can be made only by a willingness to take one's own chances, was sold piecemeal by individual surrender. American literature thus became a dishonest thing, because its honesty had, heretofore, been a higher honesty than that of the merchandisers' world.

In that world honesty had meant merely refraining from open theft; while honesty among writers had meant a willingness to take the kind of personal risk by which, if it fails, one fails alone; yet if it succeed, succeeds for all. Now the writers began to subserve, rather than to stand against, the businessman's world.

"What I object to," one of the new fellows complained, "is the writer who offers me the world's horrors without offering a solution." Thus we perceived that Flaubert had been out of his mind to give us Madame Bovary without appending a solution for adultery.

"Hemingway never wrote anything that would disturb an eight-year-old," another revoluntionary thinker added (one whose revolutionary limits were violation of local traffic ordinances). He had overlooked the fact that Hemingway's work had been disturbing twenty-to-seventy-year-olds for three decades. Was it Papa's fault that the eight-year-olds weren't ready for him?

That Hemingway should ultimately fail was implicit from the day he volunteered for service with the Italian forces. His inner conviction that he who saves himself loses his life, and he who loses it is saved, was already at work. His lifelong rejection of the small, sure success was indicated this early.

And yet, how this ultimately lent him to seekers of small but sure success! How many openings in university faculties his "failure," so easily proved, provided! How many paperfish boys from campus and office arrived, armed with blueprints to which the novel and short story would henceforward have to conform at peril of a bad grade in American writing! (A chair of literature of a great Western university is occupied today by no further qualification than the failure of Steinbeck parlayed onto the failure of Faulkner and all of it back on the nose of the failure of Hemingway.) When he sickened, and his real life began failing, the begrudgers followed closer, in greater numbers.

And, as the new owners had come from a changeless world, their view of

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America was that of encapsulated men from a glass-walled existence. Through *Life* and a few bad novels, but largely through criticism, they subscribed to the merchandisers' world and saw the future of American letters in hallowing American business practice.

Hemingway had taken the long risk and returned strengthless. They stood on the new smiling side and their advantage was plain: they planned no voyage at all.

We were back at the smiling side. We were back at the view that literature should be written for maiden eyes and ears. Only now the maiden was wearing an ivy-league suit.

POOR PAPA. He had made the journey from nothingness to the company of men; and was back at nothingness. He posed all over the place—but is it too much to assume that his final sickness began here?

It is certain that he had known of this particular danger while trailing kudu in Africa; one wonders whether he knew he was being stalked on his last tour of the Spanish bull rings.

L'Express of Paris dispatched a professional follower, who returned with a long article, "Let's Talk About Hemingway," which proposes that the rivalry between Ordonnez and Dominguin was pure publicity; and therefore that Hemingway, being a partisan of Ordonnez, was accessory to the trick. By equivalent reasoning, an admirer of Shoeless Joe Jackson must have been accessory to Abe Attell.

And how is it that he, the reporter, saw Hemingway drinking the best wine in town whereas he had once written that *vin ordinaire* was the best he ever tasted?

> But why not admit it [the reporter finally makes his challenge] and put on the gloves? I do not like that old man. Not at all. For certain reasons I have simmered all along in the reading of his books. This man is a comedian who during all his life—as a friend of mine says in an excellent way—walked around with his testicles for a necklace. But I do suspect he has none, and that he is a comedian whose literature, by means of tricks, realizes nothing more than the assumptions of *Reader's Digest*. Ernesto's virility is wine and literature. Don Ernesto is afflicted with an awfully sly and wicked look. Hiding behind his beard, Don Ernesto has a mischievous air, mischievous, *very* mischievous.

"Let us put on the gloves"—the phrase sparked a memory in me ten years old. That of a Paris roof top on a summer Sunday morning with two young Frenchmen, both friends, one a reporter not yet employed by *L'Express*. Confronted by an American of unprepossessing physique and no ring experience beyond occupying a ringside seat at St. Nick's Arena, armed with gloves the size of pillows, this ambitious youth said *"Please — not in the face"* before a blow was struck. The American, then, employing his full strength, swung one of the pillows in a vaguely upward direction and his challenger threw a right hand resembling that of a ten-year-old girl striking at a bee. The challenger immediately unlaced his gloves and offered to shake hands. He was in a sweat, but not from the French sun.

Standing beside his gun-bearer, M'Cola, in 1935, Hemingway did not share the gun-bearer's joy when they saw the hyena obscenely loping:

> . . . full belly dragging at daylight on the plain, who, shot from the stern, skittered on into speed to tumble end over end. . . . It was funny to M'Cola to see a hyena shot at close range. There was that comic slap of the bullet and the hyena's agitated surprise to find death inside him . . . to see him start that frantic circle. To see that electric speed that meant he was racing the little nickeled death inside him. But the great joke of all, the thing M'Cola waved his hands across his face about, and turned away and shook his head, ashamed even of the hyena; the pinnacle of hyenic humor, was the hyena, the classic hyena, that hit too far back while running, would circle madly, snapping and tearing at himself until he pulled his own intestines out, and then stood there, jerking them out and eating them with relish.
>
> *"Fisi,"* M'Cola would say and shake his head in delighted sorrow at there being such an awful beast. *Fisi*, the hyena, hermaphroditic, self-eating devourer of the dead, trailer of calving cows, ham-stringer, potential biter-off of your face while you slept, sad yowler, camp-follower, stinking, foul, with jaws that crack the bones the lion leaves, belly dragging, loping away on the brown plain, looking back, mongrel dog-smart in the face; whack from the little mannlicher and then the horrid circle starting. *"Fisi,"* M'Cola laughed, ashamed of him, shaking his bald black head. *"Fisi."* Eats himself. *"Fisi."*

Take off the gloves, M. de *L'Express*. They do not become the odd slope of your back. They do not become the strange way you run. Only one animal on earth giggles at the dying.

Quest Without Faith

Joseph Waldmeir

COMMITMENT to an ideology, affiliation with a cause; a tendency to argue, moralistically, in terms of white and black; indignation, optimism, disillusionment; rebelliousness—these are the most essential components for a definition of the traditional social-critical novel. Little American writing today fits the definition. There are the potboilers concerned with teen-age gangs, beatniks, Hollywood, Washington, suburbia, and crime during the 1920s. And there is the pseudo-social criticism of Cameron Hawley, Sloan Wilson, Herman Wouk, James Gould Cozzens, Ayn Rand and the Dos Passos of *Midcentury*, writers who are in reality apologists of expediency and affiliates of the *status quo*. But among the serious new American novelists—those who have done their best work since 1949—only a handful are traditional social critics; and among these, most are those World War II novelists who identified fascism as a universal ideological immorality and saw themselves as crusaders against it. (I discussed at length the war novelist's ideas and attitudes in *The Nation*, Nov. 1, 1958.)

The majority of the serious new novelists conceive of society and a man's place in it in quasi-naturalistic terms; hence they cannot be social critics in the traditional sense. The specific social villains—factory owner, orchard owner, inimical environment, "systems" such as capitalism or Nazi-fascism—against which the social critic has always fought—are for them merely aspects or symptoms of a universal illness. And to attack, even to cure, a symptom is hardly to guarantee a cure of the illness, or even to prevent the rise of new symptoms. One may defeat Nazi-fascism, for instance, without dis-

JOSEPH WALDMEIR teaches English at Michigan State University.

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turbing in the least that middle-class morality which permitted Nazi-fascism to exist in the first place, and which permitted McCarthyism to replace it as symptom. As the new novelists see it, society — amorphous, all-pervasive, uncontrollable, capricious—is invulnerable. Optimism, disillusionment, angry indignation are irrelevant in this conception; ideologies and causes are teapot-tempest anomalies.

Resolution of the implicit dilemma would seem impossible; a man either compromises with, or conforms to, such a society, or he is destroyed by it. But the novelists resolve it neatly by the creation of a third choice: disaffiliation, both from society and from crusades against social evils. In so doing, they have forsaken pure naturalism, and have thereby softened the dilemma into a paradox: society is deterministic, but the individual, though a part of society, is remarkably free—indeed, sufficiently free that he is able to ignore society utterly, if not actively to subtract himself from it.

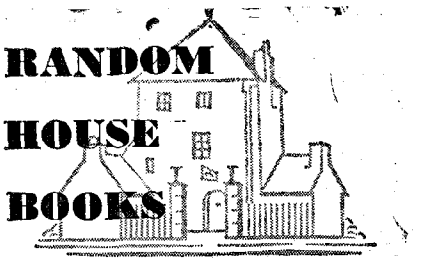
Whether by force or by choice (since a too great concern with the problems of existence in an age of conformity can push one willy-nilly outside the pale) the heroes of the new American novel are disaffiliates. Saul Bellow's Augie March and Henderson are both irrevocably separated from society. So too are Norman Mailer's Serguis O'Shaugnessy and Mikey Lovett, Nelson Algren's Frankie Machine and Dove Linkhorn, Bernard Malamud's Frank Alpine, J. D. Salinger's Holden Caulfield, William Styron's Cass Kinsolving and Peyton and Milton Loftis, Herbert Gold's Bud Williams, Paul Bowles's Port and Kit Moresby, Vance Bourjaily's U.S.D. Quincy and violated violators, and Jack Kerouac's Jack Kerouac. Even Ralph Ellison's invisible man, and the menagerie of factory workers in Harvey Swados' *On the Line*—though Swados and Ellison come very close to being social critics in the traditional sense—are outsiders.

None of these characters is capable of conformity, nor can any of them actively engage in social protest. In fact, Holden Caulfield, Bud Williams, Frank Alpine and the Moresbys are never even faced with a situation which might challenge their social consciousness. But many of the others are, and their reactions are revealing. Augie March, for example, is caught up in both labor and Communist activities, but is completely apathetic toward both except as they affect him directly. Peter Leverett in Styron's *Set This House on Fire* is dutifully respectful of his father's devotion to the New Deal, but his feelings go no further than a sort of wistful nostalgia for a commitment not his. Bourjaily's Quincy sees his youthful devotion to communism as naive enthusiasm, unworthy of the mature man of the world. Ellison's nameless hero becomes entangled with both the Left and the Right ideological wings, but ends as an absolute loner. And Mailer's Mikey Lovett, surrounded by an ex-Stalinist, an ex-deviationist and a corrupt representative of the extreme Right, finds all ideology floating away on the waves of meaningless political chatter, leaving him clutching nothing and swearing to defend it to the death.

Accompanying this social disaffilia-

Chronological Bibliography of the Disaffiliates

Nelson Algren
The Man With the Golden Arm. 1949.
Paul Bowles
The Sheltering Sky. 1949.
Norman Mailer
Barbary Shore. 1951.
J. D. Salinger
The Catcher in the Rye. 1951.
Richard Ellison
The Invisible Man. 1952.
Saul Bellow
The Adventures of Augie March. 1953.
Norman Mailer
The Deer Park. 1955.
Nelson Algren
A Walk on the Wild Side. 1956.
Herbert Gold
The Man Who Was Not With It. 1956.
Jack Kerouac
On the Road. 1957.
Bernard Malamud
The Assistant. 1957.
William Styron
Lie Down in Darkness. 1957.
Vance Bourjaily
The Violated. 1958.
George P. Elliott
Parktilden Village. 1958.
Jack Kerouac
The Subterraneans. 1958.
The Dharma Bums. 1958.
Saul Bellow
Henderson the Rain King. 1959.
Edward Loomis
The Charcoal Horse. 1959.
Norman Mailer
Advertisements for Myself. 1959.
Vance Bourjaily
Confessions of a Spent Youth. 1960.
William Styron
Set This House on Fire. 1960.
John Updike
Rabbit, Run. 1961.



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tion in the novels, which follows from the assumption that society is naturalistic, is a sort of moral disaffiliation, based on the further assumption that morals are social, hence, are at best relative, and at worst illogical. Most of the novelists deal with the common conceptions of immorality quite graphically, but seldom judgmentally. They do not condone, neither do they condemn; rather, they portray and explain and, as it were, attempt to understand. Augie March is a cheat and a thief from the beginning of his story to the end; Bud Williams is a con artist and pickpocket, as part of his with-it-ness; Nelson Algren's wild-siders are thieves, whores, drunks and perverts; William Styron's Cass Kinsolving is a drunken murderer, and his Milton and Peyton Loftis in *Lie Down in Darkness* are, respectively, a sot and a nymphomaniac; the characters in Vance Bourjaily's *The Violated* are so morally slippery that it is impossible to know who is violating whom — and very much the same thing must be said about the people in Chandler Brossard's *The Double View* and those in George P. Elliott's *Parktilden Village*.

But the two works which most clearly illustrate this amoral aspect of the new novels are Mailer's *The Deer Park* and Paul Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky*. The former is the story of the return to sexual potency (the redemption?) of Serguis O'Shaugnessy through the medium of Hollywood-nik sexual experiences. It has a little politics mixed in, and a touch of the-motion-picture-as-art discussion; but by and large, it is a book of, about and for illicit sex. *The Sheltering Sky* is also focused on sex, though not of the orgiastic variety. Kit Moresby punishes herself for her husband's death (over which she has no control — Bowles is clearly the most naturalistic of the new novelists) and for her failure to be present at his dying (over which she does have control — she is pursuing an affair with her husband's friend, Tunner, at the time of his death) by indulging her latent nymphomania as an ex officio member of a sheik's harem. Kit ends in madness; fleeing to avoid facing her guilt; but the reader is not led to believe that this is her punishment for evil — merely that this is the way such people often end up. One comes away from both books with the impression of remarkable talent, and, at the same time, with a distinctly crawly feeling. But be it noted: this must be precisely the feeling that Mailer and Bowles want the reader to be left with, else they'd have offered at least a moral judgment, if not justice, to help us wash it away.

Mailer, Bowles, the majority of the new novelists, are unable, or flatly refuse, to distinguish, except relativistically, between the accepted conceptions of good and evil; and so they see judging or choosing sides to be useless, as attempting to reform the world is useless. They drag us into depths of degradation, enervation and defeat. But most of them do not drag us into the depths simply for the sake of the dragging or the depths; nor do they leave us there. Their subject matter may be negative, but their "message," if they will pardon the expression, is positive.

THE message is far from resoundingly optimistic. It is little more than a cautious hope, without promises or guarantees. Simply stated, it is the belief that somewhere, somehow, there exists a transcendent set of values which the individual can discover and achieve, if he suffers long and hard enough, and is very lucky in his search for them. The message is almost medieval, though of course, defrocked, for there is no fixed religious system to impose order and control on the novelists' world, and no God to whom the individual can appeal for guidance or aid in identifying true values from false. The individual seeks the values either by pursuing them away from society, into the monastery with Frank Alpine, or into the wilderness with Henderson or the Moresbys; or by pursuing them into society with the majority of the characters we are discussing, armed and armored against society's pitfalls.

Thus, one achieves order and value, if at all, as a result of a quest, much as the medieval holy man and the knight achieve them. The difference rests in the certainty of the holy man and the knight that they knew what they sought; the heroes of the new novels cannot know, for who or what in a naturalistic universe can tell them? The values are at once personal and internal, universal and transcendent. The search begins and ends with the individual; it is he alone who must beat his way toward order, hoping only that he will know it when he finds it. Logically, then, the quest itself is at least as important and interesting as the finding, just as the temptation of the holy man is of as much moment as the vision, or as the perilous journey across the wasteland is as interesting as the Grail.

And just as logically, the fact that the quest sometimes fails does not negate the novel's message — any more than Lancelot's failure dimmed the significance of the Grail — unless the novelist conceives of the quest as a circular detour, as does Bourjaily in *The Violated*, Elliott in *Parktilden Village*, Styron in *Lie Down in Darkness*, and John Updike in *Rabbit, Run*. The quest does not simply fail in these novels; in reality, it hardly seems to be pursued at all. They are quest novels without a quest; hence, they lack a message as well. Bourjaily's people go nowhere, largely because their creator has nowhere to take them. Guy Cinturon is the only one who seems to have an aim in life: "the documented seduction of 350 women"; the rest are simply along for the ride. Bourjaily's interest in them extends no further than their private sensibilities, which he chronicles expertly. The inhabitants of *Parktilden Village*, though they too are carefully drawn and reasonably well motivated, stumble along in a vacuum, seeming to be headed somewhere but never arriving, until Elliott steps forward, drops his heroine melodramatically from the stage, summarily dismisses his hero, and ends on a bit of moralizing through the medium of his fourth most important character. Styron's magnificently articulate oddballs — a lush married to a paranoid and father to a moron and a

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congenital bitch — appear to be reaching toward some Truth through 400 pages of agonizing self-appraisals until, at the end, the reaching has become groping, and we end exactly where we started, having been nowhere. *Rabbit, Run* is the clearest example of this non-quest quest novel. Harry Angstrom is a man dedicated to finding value in a valueless world, and Updike encourages him, endows him with a merciless conceit and paradoxically, with a tremendous desire to love. But Harry's search is no search at all; for all his moving, he stands stock-still; the more he wriggles, the deeper grows the hole which he digs for himself. Rabbit's quest is really flight; his values are vain dreams; the only order for him is the order which entraps him.

The only message it is possible to draw from these books is that there is no message to be drawn from them. These four writers are saying that this is the way life is, that when you have passed through it you find that you are exactly where you started.

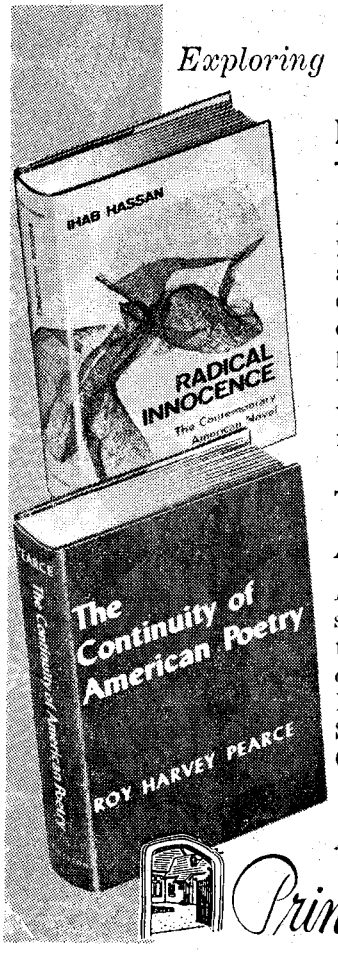
PERHAPS they are right, but it is a very difficult position to maintain and still write novels. There is a finality to it that would make saying it twice rather pointless. Bourjaily may have come to the same conclusion (Styron certainly has, for *Set This House on Fire* is the story of a successful quest, and will be discussed as such later). *Confessions of a Spent Youth* is decidedly a quest novel in which U. S. D. Quincy searches through his past for a permanent order by which his present can be justified and on which his future can be built. But he learns that a man is not made by his past, only by his present and future; that values are transitory; that commitment to love, ideology, religion or blood is impossible for him. The quest fails, but not because Bourjaily failed to send Quincy on it. The reflection of life here is as devastating as that in *The Violated*, but it no longer seems to be devastation for devastation's sake. Paul Bowles's work is even more destructive and depressing than Bourjaily's; as I said above, *The Sheltering Sky* leaves the reader with a distinctly crawly feeling. But here again we have a quest novel; Port and Kit Moresby enter the desert in a search for order and value outside or above time and space. That the search is fruitless, that they find instead disorder and physical and moral decay, does not nullify Bowles's point that life is a quest for order and value. The very fruitlessness fixes the point.

Perhaps the key book among those in which the quest fails is Norman Mailer's *Barbary Shore*. In fact, Mailer is in many ways the key figure in this discussion. *The Naked and the Dead* was a powerful novel of social criticism. Mailer's liberal anti-fascism is evident in the moral-ideological struggle between Cummings and Hearn as well as in the physical struggle between Croft and Hearn. And the death of Hearn is the liberally committed Mailer's warning to society that, unless it be alert, the Cummingses and the Crofts will prevail. Some of the war novelists continued their anti-Fascist crusade after the war (Irwin Shaw, for example, in *The Troubled Air*); but for Mailer, the end of the war brought the end of ideological certainty.

He lost conviction, and his writing shifted away from certainty toward the search for something to be certain of, away from crusade toward quest. Thus, Mikey Lovett, the hero of *Barbary Shore*, is a returned veteran without a past, for his memory is gone, trying to find himself and some justification for his existence in an enigmatic universe. His search takes him, as Mailer puts it in *Advertisements for Myself*, "into the psychic mysteries of Stalinists, secret policemen, anarchists, children, Lesbians, hysterics, revolutionaries." He searches for order and value in this, "the air of our time, authority and nihilism stalking one another in the orgiastic hollow of this century." But the search fails; political gibberish is all that Lovett has at the end — that, and the right to defend an ideology which he does not understand even sufficiently to identify. These, and the memory of the taste of Guinevere.

Barbary Shore is not a negative book, despite the failure of the quest. Mailer would have a difficult time becoming a negative writer, since he needs so badly to believe, and belief is a positive motivation for the quest. But the process of arriving (or, in Mailer's case, of re-arriving) at convictions is slow and painful for the honest, serious novelist. There are no short cuts, and substitutions are unsatisfactory, as Mailer has inadvertently proved in *The Deer Park* and may be proving again in *The Time of Her Time*. Sex, the memory of the taste of Guinevere, is the substitution he has made for order and value. Yet, even here, Mailer is not negative; he is simply at (it is to be hoped) a temporary dead end.

But the lovelessness, not the sex, is



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the dead end. All human desires and experiences, sex prominently among them, play important parts in the quest novels. They are life, and life is all that the modern quester has to guide him. He is separated socially and morally from the systems of value and order surrounding him; he is separated from religious certainty. He cannot regard desires and experiences as temptations and trials, as could the medieval holy man and knight, and eschew them as the means of success in his quest. He seeks for, rather than seeks in the name of, a higher moral order; and only through living can he hope to achieve it. But the quest novelist, whether the quest succeeds or fails for him, does not confuse desire and experience with achievement. Love is a value, not sex. Love, finally, is what Mikey Lovett and U. S. D. Quincy and Kit Moresby are denied, and so their quests fail, though they have about all the sex they can use.

LOVE, with and without sexual involvement, is the ultimate permanent and true value in the novel of the successful quest. It is love that sets Cass Kinsolving's house on fire and restores his manhood to him. It is love that matures Bud Williams away from with-it-ness, and forces Holden Caulfield finally to sort the real world from the unreal. It is love that chases Ralph Ellison's invisible hero into his dungeon, and at the end, causes him to resolve to leave it. It is love that places Frank Alpine hopelessly and helplessly behind the grocery counter. Love makes it possible for Augie March to rise above all that he learns about life, and to go on living, and laughing, despite the hopelessness of life. And it is love that sends Henderson running round and round that airplane clutching the child to his breast.

Sometimes the love is directed toward specific persons, as in the case of Cass Kinsolving and the peasant girl, Francesca; Bud Williams and his wife, Joy, and his friend, Grack; Holden Caulfield and his sister; Frank Alpine and the grocer and the grocer's daughter; and Henderson and the African lion king. Often it is far more general. Augie March comes to love nearly all the people he meets, and Ellison's nameless hero finds eventually that he must love the people he is trying to help more than he loves himself. And often, too, the love is universal, as it is in the novels of Nelson Algren and Jack Kerouac. Perhaps indiscriminate compassion is a better description than universal love here, for these two novelists seem intent on proving that all humanity is worthy of love by portraying the most unlovable in the sweetest terms. The success of the quest is mitigated, in the novels of Algren and Kerouac, by this Steinbeckian compassionate sentimentality which is at bottom irresponsible and lacking in conviction. Such sentimentality is not love at all, as the other novelists of the successful quest would define the term. For them, love must be conviction if it is to be value, and conviction means commitment, means individual responsibility for individual human actions — the only kind of responsibility possible, given a naturalistic view of the universe and of society, and given as well the ability to disaffiliate.

AGAIN the parallel between the modern and the medieval quest is apparent. For the moderns, love of man rather than love of God is the key, and responsibility to the self rather than to a prescribed code; but this is merely a difference of emphasis or direction. The holy man and the knight were human, capable of sin and a powerful sense of guilt and an awareness of the necessity of expiation; so too are the modern questers. The sin in both cases is not loving strongly enough to live up to your responsibilities, and the resulting guilt is overpowering, as is the desire to be shriven.

Gold's Bud Williams is torn by guilt for deserting his friend when he needed Bud most, and for deserting his own past. He tries to atone by shifting responsibility — by retreating to a further past in the form of a touch football game and his high school sweetheart; by wishing his father dead, thus destroying the further past; and by marrying his immediate past, thus making it part of the present. But the guilt remains until he fulfills his obligation, until he does all that it is in his power to do for Grack. Ellison's hero, neither white nor Negro, "hurt to the point of invisibility," finds through his hibernation the necessity of love, which leads him to the guilty conclusion that the hibernation is perhaps "my greatest crime . . . since there's a possibility that even an invisible man has a socially responsible role to play."

Styron's Cass Kinsolving is a derelict, driven by a nameless guilt upon his quest, and escaping from failure after failure into drunkenness and clownishness. Francesca's murder is the catalyst which activates his sense of responsibility and sends him to execute Mason Flagg as a means of dispensing justice and expiating his own culpability. That Flagg is not guilty of the murder makes little difference. He personifies the corruption and guilt of Cass, the sore which Cass is obliged to burn out before he can live again. But succeeding in the quest by means of such violence — even though from Cass's point of view, and Styron's, the violence is not evil — is terrible, and Cass wants to surrender himself. But his friend Luigi frees him instead (" 'Consider the good in yourself! Consider hope! Consider joy!' "); and the book ends with Cass denying that he has found grace or belief at the end of his quest, but asserting that he has found the ability to live, to be "what I could be for a time. . . . And that for a while would do, that would suffice."

Bellow's Henderson is much the same sort of derelict as Cass, with the same tendency toward excess and violence. His quest carries him by gradual stages back to the utterly primitive, the cry, "I want!" constantly in his heart and on his lips. In Africa, through long philosophic discussions with the doomed lion king, he comes to understand both love and responsibility, and their interrelationship, and he resolves to return to his Lily and to her theory that one

Finish It Off

A photo is taken of the family
enjoying the sunshine
and that night someone sneaks up
from behind in your flat
as you sit reading the papers
and clobbers you. You never
find out why or who, you just
lean back and die.
The sunshine is gone too,
the photograph gets into the news.
You bring up a family in three small rooms,
this crazy man comes along
to finish it off.

David Ignatow

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Bhud

he stands before me
imagined wood

the grain flows into
folds of its gown

out of the folds
empty hands flower

a featureless face
resigns the smile

the forehead yields
a seed for no eyes

the nothing light lights
where it falls fills

Cid Corman

should live not for evil but for good, not for death but for life. And it is this understanding spilling over which causes him to clutch the little Persian orphan boy to him as he circles the plane in the frozen Arctic air. Again, there is no tremendous brilliant light at the end of the quest, no heart filled with Grace nor mind with Belief. But there is life and love and hope and the feeling that the individual can do something besides simply disaffiliate. And, Bellow and Styron appear to agree, this would indeed suffice.

Malamud and Salinger both lead their heroes upon successful quests, too. Frank Alpine becomes the grocer's assistant out of guilt for his part in the robbery and assault, and he continues with his hopeless task as love and responsibility grow in him, fed by successive waves of guilt for his thievery and for his rape of Helen. With the death of Morris, his willing entrapment is complete, the sacrifice is consummated, he becomes his lover's father, and thus he gains his reason for living. Holden Caulfield wanders across the face of his world from end to end, his heart and mind split apart by his precocious adolescence. His is the eternal quest of the adolescent for maturity, a quest always accompanied by disaffiliation and iconoclasm. It succeeds for Holden through the love he bears for his sister, and his awareness at the end that he is somewhat responsible for her now and for what she will become.

But love for his sister is more an end than a means for Holden Caulfield, just as conversion to Judaism is more an end than a means for Frank Alpine, and returning to his father's trucking business in Pittsburgh is for Bud Williams. Admirable though they may be, these are pat, somewhat sentimental, solutions to the terrible problems facing these characters. Admittedly, they are convenient endings to the novels, as Herbert Gold points out in the cute last line of *The Man Who Was Not With It*: "There's a good and with it way to be not with it too"; but they are not what most of the other quest novelists, whether their quests succeed or fail, mean by acceptance of responsibility. It is the difference between means and end, broadness and narrowness or, perhaps, sign and symbol. For strangely enough, running around an airplane with a Persian orphan in your arms *is* what the other novelists mean.

EDWARD LOOMIS' brief and brilliant existentialist novel, *The Charcoal Horse*, illustrates this distinction with utmost clarity. Gillespie, the hero, is a soldier who has accidentally committed a minor offense. He fears that confession, that is, acceptance of his responsibility, will cast suspicion upon him for another more serious, though still minor, crime. He chooses to do nothing, and as a consequence, a murder is committed and the murderer is sentenced to hang. Driven by guilt — which, rather than love, is the permanent value in existentialism — Gillespie pursues a quest for expiation. He tries to assume sufficient responsibility to keep the murderer from being hanged, but he is not permitted to do so, for the murderer too is responsible. In fact, Gillespie is not allowed even the solace of public expiation. There will be no punishment, no consequences, he is told. The responsibility is his entirely; the consequences are private and personal, and so is the guilt.

This is the order which the modern quester seeks, the order of pure individual responsibility. Gillespie is utterly free at the end, as far as the world outside himself is concerned. The only crutch the army permits him is the command to stand at attention. There is no pat answer for Gillespie. No simple way out —no way out at all. He must do and be exactly what he must do and be, just as Henderson must, and Cass Kinsolving.

But Styron, Bellow and the other quest novelists are not existentialists (despite Styron's clever manipulation of being and nothingness at the conclusion of *Set This House on Fire*). Their circles of love and responsibility expand outward rather than retreat inward. Their sense of guilt is instrumental; expiation is possible if the quest succeeds. Still, they and Loomis are in close agreement; Loomis simply has pushed the concept of individual responsibility to its logical extreme.

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whom I have discussed here (and some others, notably James Baldwin, William Goldman, Flannery O'Connor and Gore Vidal who, but for the exigencies of time and space, would have figured prominently in the discussion) are primarily quest novelists, attempting to find a way to exist with dignity and self-respect within an enigmatic universe. I said at the outset that these writers are not social critics in the traditional sense — the value and order they seek exist beyond causes and ideologies — but they certainly are social critics in another, perhaps even broader, sense. To seek a new method and a new answer is implicitly to criticize the old. The finding or reaffirmation of the oldest of answers, love and individual responsibility, to the problems of the human condition, is more than an implied criticism of society. It is at once a challenge, an accusation and a demand for change.

The Avant-Garde: Which Way Is Forward?

Ihab Hassan

LOOK for the *avant-garde* hard enough and you may slip on a banana peel, discarded probably by a monkey hurtling through outer space.

I have no intention of speaking in riddles, though my theme has something to do with absurdity. I mean this: Fact is overreaching Fiction in our day, and technology beggars the imagination. The only *avant-garde* may be immured in a septic lab, busy concocting witches' brew or panaceas. This has been said before.

And denied before. There are those, like myself, who still believe in Fiction. Like Bellow's hero, Henderson, they accept the brute existence of phenomena, yet they insist on the freedom achieved in a world that can be noumenal. For them, meanings are generated when Fact becomes Fiction.

For them, too, the question of an *avant-garde* in writing is important. And so it is. It is also encrusted with clichés. The question may even have become meaningless — for reasons that I hope will seem relevant to the essential character of American fiction.

The French term *"avant-garde"* is decidedly nostalgic. It recalls a bourgeois society dedicated to certain ideals and rational procedures, moving historically toward goals, whether clear or ambiguous, and willing, through its cunning or generosity, to permit a fraction of it to oppose or outstrip the rest. The *avant-garde*, in short, is a nineteenth-century concept. It presupposes a meaning and direction to change, and a culture in regard to which the *avant-garde* may define itself. Above all, it assumes a relation between style and society, language and reality. It is doubtful that any of these conditions obtain nowadays, doubtful even that a society exists.

How does this affect contemporary fiction? Let us be categorical for the moment. There seem to be two kinds of novels: one that makes an effort to grasp the nature of our living reality, and another that, ostrichlike, ignores it. (The latter may be ignored in turn, or perhaps assigned to a history of entertainment.) The first kind of fiction moves, without reference to a common center, in a hundred, ragged, bristling ways, impelled sometimes by nothing less than the will to affirm man's being, and sometimes by nothing more than an idiosyncratic vision or dream. In this category, all works seem equally *avant-garde* — no one knows which direction is forward! — and none is genuinely so. This is outrageous relativism.

Literature may flirt with anarchy, but can criticism properly do so? Why not? The thought should not be snappishly dismissed. But for the moment let us try to reclaim something from relativism. Perhaps a precept or two.

THE MOST radical experiments in form are now pursued, it seems to me, in France—by Beckett, Genet, Ionesco; by the "anti-novelists," Sarraute, Butor, Robbe-Grillet, et al. These experiments imply a new concept of literature, one that must be finally understood in non-aesthetic terms. The "aliterature" of which Claude Mauriac speaks, the "zero degree" of literature which Roland Barthes examines, aspire to non-communication, to silence. Literature, in a sense, is attempting to cancel itself, and the artist is left in the paradoxical position of the Cretan who claimed that all Cretans were liars. The central critical problem of our day, therefore, is the problem of antiform — not simply the smashing of form but the subversion of the idea of form itself. The problem is a problem of our *civilization*. It is not one that a traditional view of the *avant-garde* can illuminate or the dogmas of the New Criticism can explain.

And the problem is as pressing in America as it is in France. The music of John Cage, the dancing of Merce Cunningham, the new methods of improvisation on stage and screen, the theatre of Gerber or Albee, the literature of the Beats, the fashionable application of Zen to art and life, however disparate, faddish or *outré* they may seem, betray a distrust of civilization and reflect the impulse to assimilate Chance into Pattern—all the characteristics of antiform. In a more mixed, more subterranean way, the same motives operate in recent American fiction, giving birth to a new image of the American Adam, a scapegoat rebel, at once criminal and saintly, whose heroic aim is to create meaning without contexts of meaning. Without Society, the Self expands—to the bursting point.

THESE motives trace a kind of pattern on the shifting surface of the contemporary novel. We do not recognize the pattern easily because our fiction is young, hence easy to depreciate—but does not truth reside in the heart of every fashion? And we do not recognize it also because our view of recent literature is too strongly mediated by critics whose assumptions are at variance with those of the authors they criticize. Their commentaries, so often brilliant and profound, assume certain ideals about sanity and society, about mind, manners, morality and myth, that a whole generation, attuned to other needs and another rhetoric, cannot bring itself to share.

The point is this: to see what is happening in American fiction is to divest ourselves of our pieties—pieties about reason, history, morality, even about the direction of an *avant-garde*. Piety and judiciousness are no longer enough. They cannot guide us through the inferno in which we travel. Melodrama, you say? There are testaments to this. The testaments of Cheever, Baldwin and Roth—could any three writers be more dissimilar in craft or background! —in the *Esquire* symposium on fiction. The testament of Mailer in "The White Negro" and Flannery O'Connor in "The

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IHAB HASSAN, born in Cairo, holds degrees in Electrical Engineering and English from the University of Pennsylvania. He teaches English at Wesleyan University and is the author of Radical Innocence: The Contemporary American Novel (*Princeton University Press*).

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Fiction Writer and His Country." The testament of their novels.

Generalizations must be finally tested against concrete examples, tested and contradicted too. In viewing the rich, disorderly spectacle of contemporary fiction, I think it may be useful to entertain these extreme propositions:

1. Society, as a rational, historical, or moral order, is no longer available to the writer.

2. The new hero, a rebel-victim, projects a difficult and private existential ethic.

3. Form, by opening itself to chance and absurdity, invites harsh distortions, and sometimes verges on denying itself.

These notions are not meant to supplement the laws of thermodynamics. They are simply ideas which, taken together, may define a vanishing limit, perhaps a radical vision, toward which much of recent fiction tends. It is not difficult to find novels that embody the first of these notions, the black and pervasive sense of social collapse. It is more difficult to find novels that go on to discover characters, and above all styles, that are an ineluctable part of our scene. In this respect, the gamut of contemporary fiction runs from, say, the straight naturalism of Willard Motley's *Knock on Any Door* to the shocking surrealism of William Burroughs' *The Naked Lunch.*

The growing sense of collapse embraces both wide and narrow segments of culture. The skillful novels of Chandler Brossard, *The Bold Saboteurs* or *The Double View,* depict orgy, crime and lunacy among the refugees of Greenwich Village. John Clellon Holmes's *Go* and Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* concern themselves with the holy goofs wearing the stigmata of the Beat. Herbert Gold's *The Man Who Was Not With It* presents a moving portrait of the "carnies," children of fancy and the night. Ellison's *Invisible Man* and Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain,* two fine novels indeed, explore the impossible intricacies of the Negro in our culture. And Paul Bowles, in *The Sheltering Sky* or *Let It Come Down,* dissects the baleful plight of Americans expatriated to North Africa. The world of these novels—Ellison's may be an exception — is special; their characters are marginal. Their crazy mirror images of disintegration are terrible and smooth. But the same images of decay may be seen in even larger sub-cultures of our fiction. The two most vital centers of writing in the last two decades have been located in the Christian, agrarian South: Carson McCullers, Truman Capote, William Styron, Flannery O'Connor, William Goyen; and the Jewish, urban North: J. D. Salinger, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Harvey Swados, Philip Roth. Yet the "societies" these novelists imply reflect only too sharply the general paralysis of the culture they are forced to share. Does this betoken a lack of social consciousness on the part of our writers, or an absence of a society?

Since Don Quixote, however, novels have created, and been created by, characters. A vision is an abstract thing, bodiless without heroes to perform it in dramatic actions. One of the tasks of the contemporary novelist has been to create characters who *can* subsist in the vacuum of our world, and who can transmute their agony into intimations of life. Crime is the dark face of sainthood; rebellion and immolation, inseparable, are the wages of freedom. The hipsters of Kerouac are a notorious and unconvincing example. The tough-guy losers of James Jones's *From Here to Eternity,* and the creepy disaffiliated heroes of John Updike's *Rabbit, Run,* or J. P. Donleavy's *The Ginger Man,* are another. In her native South, where theology runs wild, Flannery O'Connor gives us grotesque figures—that is, truthful, childlike distortions—of men whose search for grace, in *Wise Blood* or *The Violent Bear It Away,* leads them into the paths of damnation. Four of our very best novelists, Ellison, Styron, Bellow and Mailer, delineate for us a more central yet still fiercely existential hero. In *The Invisible Man* and *Set This House on Fire,* Ellison and Styron show that freedom, that human dignity itself, must be salvaged from the hideous temptations of crime. In his first novel, *Dangling Man,* and in his last, *Henderson the Rain King,* Bellow tells us how freedom may be surrendered in despair or reclaimed again in a quixotic ideal of service. And Mailer—a novelist, incidentally, whose work shows marks of bold though erratic progress—concerns himself with the absolute meaning of power, the demonic agent of destruction as well as autonomous self-renewal. *Barbary Shore* explores darkly the politics of sex; *The Deer Park* explores the sexology of power. For power and sex—there is a secret point at which these two meet, as Sade knew—are among our last irreducible values, and in them now rests the meaning of individual identity.

The existential hero is an accurate, though somewhat extreme, expression of our disaffection. A more moderate figure is that of the nostalgic hero, caught

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between a dying world and another powerless to be born. He is the adolescent, par excellence, who has lost his Eden but finds no world to take its place. In his case, therefore, initiation is an exercise in memory, a record of sadness or outrage. Initiation into what? Holden, in Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye,* cannot erase all the obscenities of the world; Collins, in Capote's *The Grass Harp,* cannot transform the world into Dolly's image of a chinaberry tree; Frankie, in McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding,* cannot become part of adult ceremony; nor can Clinton, in Herlihy's *All Fall Down,* prevent life from shaking down the innocent from the branches of apple trees. What then is their function or their estate? Without a father, the boy hero of Capote's *Other Voices, Other Rooms,* can only regress to a shuttered room, and the adolescent hero of Purdy's *Malcolm* can only expire. The nostalgic hero is an innocent at a time when innocence must be as radical as Job, Prometheus or Christ.

IN THE END, however, it is only form that can unite social vision and dramatic action, giving them the substance of art, which is a kind of life. Naturalism, which used to be the simplest method of recording both protest and desolation, is making new alliances in order to stage a comeback. Hence the "romantic naturalism" of Algren's *A Walk on the Wild Side,* the "symbolic naturalism" of Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead,* the "protestant naturalism" of Motley's *Knock on Any Door.* Personally, I have some doubts as to the resourcefulness of this mode. Opening itself to the possibilities of experience, naturalism does not fully convey the density or contradiction of our lives. Which of these books, beside Mailer's, are we likely to remember for long?

The picaresque or discursive novel, also undergoing a renascence, seems a little more venturesome. Works like Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March,* Ellison's *The Invisible Man,* Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye,* Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's,* Kerouac's *On the Road,* or Garrett's *Which Ones Are the Enemy?* endeavor to free themselves from closed or terminal forms, and under the deceptive guise of comedy or even whimsy, celebrate the bitter imperatives of the self in a chaotic world. Their true mode, however, is the mode of irony, which is neither comic nor yet tragic, and which accords to experience no final resolution. The cycle of tears and laughter is unending! Illusion and reality are a pair of clowns engaged in outrageous mummery. This is what we see in Nabokov's *Lolita,* Cheever's *The Wapshot Chronicle* and —a new and uproarious book—Joseph Heller's *Catch-22.*

But the picaresque, though it acquaints fiction with the energy of disorder, does not always express the dark sense of contingency which unsettles our daily life. An ironic style of nightmare may be required, a rhetoric of error, a suggestion of macabre silence. *The Invisible Man* takes, I think, an important step in this direction. So does Bernard Malamud's *The Natural,* the story of a baseball player, dreamy, askew and finally muffled. The novels of Terry Southern also perfect an original and "secret" style. In *Flash and Filigree* and *The Magic Christian,* Terry Southern cunningly fuses the banal and the dreadful into a viciously satiric vision. A more mannered effort, perhaps, is that of Purdy, particularly in *63 Dream Place* and *Malcolm.* The precise irrelevance of his dialogue is his true comment on reality: what he does not say is what he most wants to say. This is what Salinger, in the later novelettes, "Zooey" and "Seymour: An Introduction," is after. For both writers, and they are different, form becomes a parody of itself, a will to self-repudiation.

To compel form to submit to parody, chance or dislocation is to stand on the threshold of surrealism. There are some passages in Kerouac's *The Subterraneans* which spring sweetly from the depth. Lawrence Ferlinghetti's novella, *Her,* about a "true mad hero" in search of himself, cultivates the style of a Beat, tame, Rimbaud. It shows us little that we could not see otherwise. Burroughs' *The Naked Lunch* is another matter. The "underground" novel of the Beat generation gnaws its way to a new level of perception. In the terrifying metaphor of junk—and the erotic content of the book is devoured by the genius, the fiend, of narcotics—Burroughs seems to have found a shocking expression of social annihilation, dramatic inaction and the futility of language. The novel is a testament to the insanity of society, and also to the insane pride, the solipsism, of the human spirit—the junkie is bodiless, his corpse is a needle cushion. This is the ghastly alchemy of our age, which recalls Paracelsus: "They imagine to perform bodily actions while in fact they have no physical bodies but act in their thoughts." It will take time to judge this book, though its judgment on *us* must stand.

THE last writer I shall mention sums up what I believe is genuine in contemporary fiction. With the exception of Leslie Fiedler and Albert Guerard, few critics have given him serious thought.* I am referring to John Hawkes. His earlier novel, *The Cannibal,* set in occupied Germany, and developed in a surreal style of withering lucidity, tells us more about history and hate, about the over-organized madness of the West, than most novels since Kafka. *The Beetle Leg,* which alone among the novels of Hawkes is set in America, blazes on our consciousness with the combined force of parody and

*See also "Vision of a Nightmare" by Webster Schott; *The Nation,* September 2.

Koisimi Buddhist of Altitudes

He sees a skinny waterfall hanging
Like a bare root, a shape seeking water
Down which the particles of water crawl,
And climbs, crawling up the shined
Rock rubbing his fingerprints off,
And looks from the top at the land,
As it was, clawed from within, nonetheless
Unbroken. He cries, *It is me!*
At the glare, and waits; he hears
On the horizon the faint whine of wind
Machining its way to where he is.
The first eddy starts picking up speed;
Rock and sunlight start circling
Around him — they lose hold and skid
Some degrees, appear to recover,
And suddenly skid outward and vanish.
***What is this wind?* Koisimi challenges.**
***It is not me,* he knows, and leans**
In any direction, which is the way.

Galway Kinnell

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myth. His new book, *The Lime Twig*, has a plot that seems almost discernible: it recounts the criminal adventures behind the scene of an English horse race, the Aldington Golden Bowl. The evil and horror which emerge have no objective correlative except the human soul. For the story is a story of love and evil—the abominations of desires come true and dreams become fact. The world of *The Lime Twig* is not only one without sanctions: it is a world without limits. Anything can happen because everything *does* happen. And there is no suggestion of redemption in it. Language loses its normal reference, action loses its focus, comedy is nightmare. As Hawkes put it, "there is no pathetic fun or mournful frolic like our desire. The consummation of the sparrow's wings."

I must end. The American novel continues. Its failings are many. I have not judged them all, for I feel that its energy, its rich diversity, warrant patience. Critical patience is not a passive thing: it is a quality of attention. The current moment labors to give forth life precisely because its knowledge of death is so profound. Order and chaos may be beside the point. The idea of an *avant-garde* may not serve us best. When directions become finally clear, we will know. Perhaps the future goal of Fiction is not to overtake the monstrosities of Fact but rather to make them obsolescent. Perhaps the goal, as a character in Durrell's "Alexandria Quartet" put it, "is to grow a personality which in the end enables man to transcend art." This will require patience.

Miller: Only the Beginning

Terry Southern

AS THE Hemingway-Faulkner epoch of our national literature draws now to a more or less determined close, it begins to appear increasingly apt that, of this epoch, the work of the American which may finally stand, like a pinnacle among foreshortened towers, is that of the dreaded dark horse, Henry Miller. This particular potential of his work* would seem due almost less to its merit than to the fact that it falls dead-center in the cultural grain, where that of the others remains, as art, purely idiosyncratic.

Miller's work is in the tradition of Whitman, Wolfe and Sandburg, the only tradition which has so far proved indigenous to the culture; it is, of course, the tradition of *romantic agony*. Romantic agony, in the classic Baudelairean form from which it derives, may be likened to the manic-depressive syndrome in psychology; it is characterized, in its effect, by spontaniety and it contains both the lustiest affirmation of life and the most severe denial of it. In its American species it has never, before Miller, been full-blooded — the negative has always been edited out of it, either after or before leaving the author's desk; and over the years it gradually became a lopsided, unbearable freak, until finally, at the hands of William Saroyan, it was given one last, and fatal, overdose of uncut *schmalz* and went into terminal decline as a literary form. What we are seeing now in the new and popular work — as represented by that of Kerouac and Ginsberg — is a revival of this old form, almost at its purest. There is nothing mysterious about the national appeal of this literature nor, certainly, is there anything merely voguish about it; it has that hysterical optimism, the shout, *"Life is worth living!"* at top voice which is so encouraging to us all, and quite likely to remain so. But the reason one can stomach it in its present form is that, unlike that preceding it, it is now legitimately balanced: for every ounce of the ecstatic, there is an ounce of the morbid. It has become, or very nearly so, full-blooded.

NO ONE who has read Henry Miller's early work, or who pretends to any information about the history of creative forms, can doubt his absolute formative influence on this aspect of the contemporary scheme. For unpredictable spontaniety and emotional range, for pure uncompromisingly schizoid integrity in self-revelation, this work — as represented by *Tropic of Cancer*, and

*In referring to Miller's "work," the principal concern is with that body of his writing which has not yet been published in America — except for *Tropic of Cancer*, which is, however, superbly representative of the whole.

TERRY SOUTHERN is the author of The Magic Christian (*Random House*) *and* Flash and Filigree (*Coward-McCann*).

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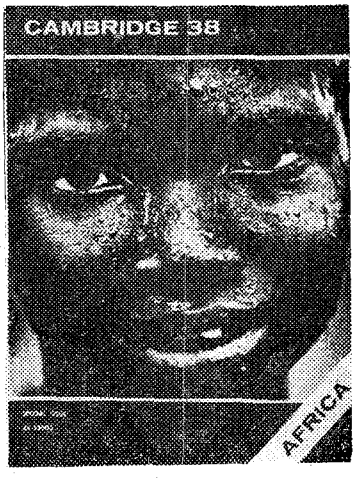

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much of it written as long as twenty-five years ago — remains without peer.

Persons who speak of Henry Miller as "uncultured" are missing the point, and could not do better, really, than simply drop everything and spend the rest of their lives, or as much as required, in bringing their personal semantics into line with some kind of reality. Such persons are invariably, or so it has been my experience, of slight and superficial tastes, whose notions of culture scarcely extend beyond engaging in childish talk some fog-bound professor of English. Needless to say, they lack any real connection with art, let alone possess a sense of history of its forms, or any interest thereof. The fact is that Henry Miller *is* our culture of today, both in his work and in the image he has created of himself as an artist. A proof of this is that despite the extremely wide acceptance of another image — that of Ernest Hemingway — the young writer today rejects it for that of Miller. These two images are antithetical, and the difference between them is, of course, crucial. It is the difference between a young man in a Brooks Brothers suit and a young man without a tie; the difference between hacking out a feature story at the office of the *Paris Herald* and sitting around the Café Dôme talking to a whore, or a Picasso; the difference between the Right Bank and the Left Bank; it is, in short, the difference between the would-be professional and the would-be artist.

THE OVER-ALL accomplishment of Miller's work is immeasurable. The fact that language itself has presented a problem peculiar to American literature is a fairly well-known phenomenon, though it does not always appear to be fully understood. The peculiarity of this problem is to be found in the singular circumstance that English is the only Western language which contains words of high-frequency usage — i.e., the so-called "four-letter words" — which are, of themselves, inadmissible in certain forms of converse and in all literary forms of mass media. With Western languages of equal currency — French, German, Italian and Spanish — it is only possible to *construct*, out of existing and acceptable words, *images* which are offensive and, consequently, inadmissible. The nature of these languages is such that there cannot exist an instance of an isolated word, of high-frequency usage, which is of itself so potently taboo that it cannot be employed.

One of the crucial problems, then, in American literary creation has been how to avoid the use of these words with the minimum loss of verisimilitude in dialogue, and without too seriously crippling the chance, in narrative, for meaningful self-expression. Artists have deplored these arbitrarily imposed limits as nothing less than primitive superstition, and giants, of course, have ignored them. Certainly there is no doubt as to where the bulk of credit must go for the progress so far in overthrowing this tyranny of words. And this alone assures Miller a very high place indeed in our literary history, but it is not all. What he has done besides is to develop an entirely new form. The form he uses is sometimes called "the autobiographical novel," but this is a misnomer; the word "autobiographical" obtains merely because the narrator (that is, the created *I*) sounds so very real. It is now generally recognized that all that is dramatically engaging—whether tragic or comic — must appear to stem from a bedrock of reality. In narrative, this means a straight-faced delivery. This straight face can extend, as it does with Miller, beyond the work itself, so that, when questioned about it he can say: "Oh yes, that's all real, that really happened, that's *me* I'm writing about, etc." which is, of course, nonsense, but, in any case, does not alter the new form which he has brought into being. This

Prospect Beach

Here I slept with my face turned
toward the sun,
my eyes closed and my arms lying
beside me
like two different animals that
enjoyed my smell.

What roar, ocean! What an alien
you are.
You are clear and indecipherable
and full of fish:
strange and fast ones; and full
of wild plants.

I watched the stripped killies
swim near shore
and the children splashing about
holding glass jars;
trying to catch a fish
in a bare hand.

And I was old, with the taste of sleep
in my mouth.
Old and solitary, shivering
in the breeze.
There are none like me here, only
companions and marvels.

Lewis Lipsitz

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At Willard Brook

Spirit like water
moulded by unseen stone
and sandbar, pleats and funnels
according to its own
submerged necessity —
to the indolent eye
pure wilfulness, to the stray
pine-needle boiling
in that cascade-bent pool
a random fury: Law,
if that's what's wanted, lies
asking to be read
in the dried brook-bed.

Adrienne Rich

form — the narrative using a wholly created, but entirely convincing *I* — is one of the great forms of the future, even as it is today, in the work, for example, of William Burroughs and John Rechy. It is the form, one may recall, which *The Catcher in the Rye would* have used had it been written by a child, or had it been *presented* as having been written by a child. *Convincingness* is the key to this form and *candor* is the key to convincingness; it is relatively easy (i.e., not very risky) to present the effect of candor in a twelve-year-old boy — it is a bit tricky when presenting this effect in an adult. Scrupulously honest mind-flow of an adult was nonexistent in American literature before the recent publication of *Tropic of Cancer*.

AMERICA has produced a fair amount of literature to receive international acclaim; certainly there is no dearth of American Nobel Prize-winners. What is *rare*, however, and quite possibly unique, is for a culture to have at its bosom an artist whose major work has not merely gone unpublished in his own country, but has actually been outlawed there . . . work, that is to say, hailed throughout the rest of the world as one of the very first importance, and by an author more widely read, according to the University of California librarian, Lawrence Powell, than any American living; other than Upton Sinclair, or any dead, other than Mark Twain and Jack London. Yet it is just within the past year that the public has been allowed to taste of its past and future heritage. With *Tropic of Cancer* accounted for, this leaves only *Tropic of Capricorn, The World of Sex, Black Spring, Quiet Days in Clichy, Sexus, Plexus* and at least one other volume of *The Rosy Crucifixion* — or a total of several thousand pages — still on the dark side of the horizon.

November 18, 1961

The 'Western': Definition of the Myth

John Williams

GIVEN THE dense history of the American West, nearly unexplored in its most fundamental aspects and potentially the richest of American myths, why has there not emerged a modern novelist of the first rank to deal adequately with the subject? Why has the West not produced its equivalent of New England's Melville or Hawthorne —or, in modern times, of the South's Faulkner or Warren?

The question has been asked before, but the answers usually given are somewhat too easy. It is true that the Western subject has had the curious fate to be exploited, cheapened and sentimentalized before it had a chance to enrich itself naturally, through the slow accretion of history and change. It is true that the subject of the West has undergone a process of mindless stereotyping by a line of literary racketeers that extends from the hired hacks of a hundred years ago who composed Erastus Beadle's Dime Novels to such contemporary pulp writers as Nelson Nye and Luke Short—men contemptuous of the stories they have to tell, of the people who animate them and of the settings upon which they are played. It is true that the history of the West has been nearly taken over by the romantic regionalist, almost always an amateur historian with an obsessive but sentimental concern for Western objects and history, a concern which is consistently a means of escaping significance rather than a means of confronting it.

But the real reason that the Western theme remains inadequately explored is more fundamental. It concerns a misunderstanding of the nature of the subject out of which the theme emerges and hence a misunderstanding of its implications, literary and otherwise.

There are, broadly speaking, two kinds

JOHN WILLIAMS is the author of two novels: Nothing But the Night *(Alan Swallow) and* Butcher's Crossing *(Macmillan); and a book of verse,* The Broken Landscape *(Alan Swallow). He is now at work on a new novel and a second collection of poetry. Mr. Williams is in the English Department, University of Denver.*

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of uses to which the Western myth has been put in modern fiction—the first and more familiar is found in the conventional "Western"; the second is found in serious treatment of the Western by such novelists as Walter van Clark, A. B. Guthrie and Frederick Manfred. At first glance, it might seem that these two uses have as little in common as have the two sets of authors who employ them. But I believe that if they are examined with some care it will become clear that they do have failings in common, and that an understanding of both the uses and their failures will suggest an answer to the question with which I began this note.

In its simplest form, the conventional Western involves an elemental conflict between the personified forces of Good and Evil, as these are variously represented by cowboy and rustler, cowboy and Indian, the marshal and the bank robber, or (in a later and more socially conscious version of the formula) by the conflict between the squatter and the landowner. Complications may enter—the marshal may be beset with worldly temptations; the landowner, imperfectly evil, may enlist our sympathies for a moment; and in curious neo-classic variations, passion may set itself against honor.

It is tempting to dismiss such familiar manipulation of the myth; but the formula persists, and with a disturbing vigor. However cheaply it may be presented, however superficially exploited, its persistence demonstrates the evocation of a deep response in the consciousness of the people. The response is real; but though it may have been widely identified as such, it is not, I believe, really a response to the *Western* myth. It is, rather, a response to another habit of mind, deeply rooted and essentially American in its tone and application.

That is the New England Calvinist habit of mind, whose influence upon American culture has been both pervasive and profound. The early Calvinists saw experience as a never-ending contest between Good and Evil. Though fundamentally corrupt, man might receive, through the grace of God, a state of salvation. Of this inner state of Grace man can never be fully sure, but he may suspect its presence by such outward signs as wealth, power or worldly success. Since this state is the choice of God, the elect tend to be absolutely good; and the more numerous damned tend to be absolutely evil. This affair is wholly predetermined; man's will avails him only the illusion of choice; and the world is only a stage upon which mankind acts out a drama in which Good will ultimately prevail and in which Evil will inevitably be destroyed. In the very simplicity and inadequacy of this world view lies its essentially dramatic nature. All experience is finally allegorical, and its meaning is determined by something outside itself.

The relationship between this habit of mind and the typically primitive Western is immediately apparent. The hero is inexplicably and essentially good. His virtue does not depend upon the "good deeds" he performs; rather, such deeds operate as outward signs of inward grace. Similarly, the villain is by his nature villainous, and not made so by choice, circumstances or environment; more often than not these are identical to those of the hero. And even in those instances, relatively infrequent today, when the villain is Indian or Mexican, the uses of racial origin are not so conventionally bigoted as they might appear. Racial backgrounds are not explanations of villainy; they are merely outward signs of inward damnation. In the curiously primitive nature of this drama, it is necessary that we know at every moment the figure in whom Evil is concentrated and that we be constantly assured that it is doomed to destruction. Beneath the gunplay, the pounding hooves and the crashing stagecoaches, there is a curious, slow, ritualistic movement that is essentially religious.

THERE ARE, to be sure, more sophisticated variations upon this allegorical formula, though even the variations have inescapable connections with the original Calvinistic base. For example, in Owen Wister's *The Virginian*, though the hidden base is Calvinistic, certain recognizable Emersonian revisions upon the doctrine emerge. In the Emersonian formula, the Natural Man (i.e., the man who places his faith in his instinct rather than in his reason) replaces the Elect of God. In either formula, the end is a state of Grace, but in the Emersonian version the reliance upon instinct may come about either accidentally out of ignorance or by an initial act of the will whereby one chooses to relinquish the will. The Virginian, the Natural Man, is good by virtue of his "naturalness"; Trampas is evil in the older, more purely Calvinistic sense; and the schoolteacher, Mary Wood, is the figure of Emersonian compromise, the neither-good-nor-evil, code-produced human being whose salvation lies in the surrender of the intellect.

If, viewed in this manner, *The Virginian* seems a grotesque echo of Henry James's formula (the "natural," crude, innocent American versus the "unnatural," sensitive, cultured European), we should not be surprised. Calvinism, as it manifests itself in literary art, is most likely to move toward allegory, as does the primitive Western; but when the more serious artist can no longer sustain the religious faith necessary for allegory, then the transformed Calvinist habit of mind is likely to move toward the novel of manners. Henry James, a Calvinist out of the Emersonian transformation, was a novelist of manners less from choice than from necessity; he perceived that "essences" of tremendous complexity lay in human character, and that these essences existed mysteriously, obscurely. The only way to get at them was by an examination of their outward manifestations, which were most precisely discoverable in the manners of individuals, classes, or even nations. To put it baldly, the novel of allegory depends upon a rigid and simple religious or philosophical system; the novel of manners depends upon a stable and numerous society, one in which the moral code can in some way be externalized in the more or less predictable details of daily life.

It seems obvious, then, that the Western landscape and subject, especially in their historic beginnings, are not really appropriate to the Calvinistic formula which has most frequently enclosed them. What has been widely accepted as the "Western" myth is really a habit of mind emerging from the geography and history of New England and applied uncritically to another place and time.

IF THE popular Western mechanically and irrelevantly furnishes forth perfunctory details, using stories so stereotyped and empty that they have become independent of human beings, and therefore contemptuous of them, what of the serious novel that would make use of the Western theme and subject?

Because of their integrity and talent, one might wish to exempt such novelists as Walter van Tilburg Clark, Frederick Manfred and even A. B. Guthrie from a charge even remotely similar to the one leveled against the legion of hacks who have done so much to cheapen the Western theme. But with the possible exception of Clark, each of these novelists is, in his own way, guilty of mistaking the real nature of his subject and of imprecisely adjusting his form to the demands of that subject. It is not that they have hit upon the wrong myth, but that they have failed to recognize in

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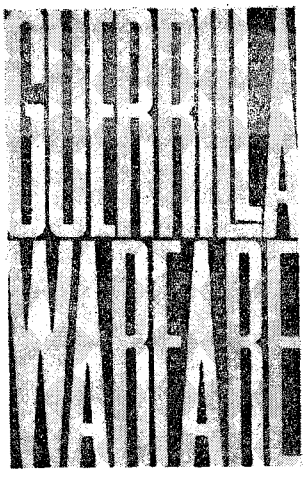
the first place that their subject is mythic. Moment by moment, the good novelist is confronted by the necessities and implications of his matter; the worth of his novel will in many respects be dependent upon his success in adjusting form to subject.

Novelists have used, singly or in combination, four forms: the tragic, the comic, the epic and the mythic.

The details which formalize the tragic subject are most often historical and "true," either in fact or effect; thus tragedy has the advantage of seeming inevitable. So that they may have great powers of generalization, its characters are usually of high rank, most often functionaries of the state; the province of tragedy is public life, and hence the feeling that it evokes is public feeling. It is a requisite of tragedy that its outcome be unfortunate, because its theme is the cost of disorder in an ordered universe.

Comedy, on the other hand, is non-historical and invented; the characters are of low or moderate estate — or if they are not, the novelist's focus is upon the non-public aspects of their lives; the conflicts which turn the plot and impel the characters are relatively trivial; the field in which they exist is that of private experience. Thus, the subject of comedy is most often domestic or social; and the outcome, if not always joyful, is at least ironic and mixed. Comedy has been profoundly influential upon the development of the novel; from its near-beginnings in Madame de LaFayette, Defoe and Fielding, and through its development in Jane Austen, Henry James and Ford Madox Ford, it has achieved most of its distinction as a form by exploring the comic subject.

The epic was a form most meaningful to primitive cultures seeking unification of scattered strengths and cultural resources; it has been used imperfectly and with relative infrequency in the last two or three hundred years. Since its central character embodies the most primitive nationalistic aspirations of a people, its plot, though embedded in a kind of history, is really an accretion of fantastic and superhuman adventures. Because its intention is relatively simple, its structure is sequential and repetitive. Unlike the tragic character, the epic character tends to be one-dimensional, flat and not particularly distinguished by intellectual or moral powers. His virtues are the simple ones of physical courage and strength, singleness of purpose and blind endurance. Again, unlike tragedy, the outcome of the epic is always fortunate



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for the real subject, the people—though the hero may sacrifice himself to make that outcome possible. Its tone is triumphant; its rhetoric is inflated, extreme; as a form that embodies an intention prior to that of tragedy, it is a movement through those conflicts that must be overcome to establish order in the first place. It does not move among the conflicts that threaten an order long established.

IT IS upon this epic subject, or more exactly upon the form and manner which is an outgrowth of the subject, that the novelist who would put to serious use the Western theme has most frequently and unfortunately stumbled.

Superficially, the Western adventure seems typically epic, compounded as it is of individual acts of bravery; of strength and endurance before dreadful hardships; of treks across unknown lands; of enemies subjugated and wild beasts slain; of heroes whose names have come down with legendary force. But despite its appearance, the adventure is not epical, and it is not so essentially.

What gives the epic its unique force and what finally justifies and sustains both its rhetoric and repetitive structure, is its fundamentally nationalistic nature. The heroism, the bloodletting, the superhuman bravery, the terrible mutilations — these are given point and intensity only by the nationalistic impulse that lies behind them. Without that impulse, the adventure (handled epically) is empty, is bombast, is violence without rage.

Myth bears certain resemblances to the other forms and subjects I have mentioned; but these are in the main superficial. As in tragedy, the mythic subject rises from the enveloping action of history, but the events that detail that subject are invented. For example, in *Moby Dick* we are at all times profoundly aware of the social, economic, religious and political forces that impel the *Pequod* and its crew upon their journey, and we believe in those forces as a matter of course. But the events and characters which specify the quest are intensely symbolic and they compel belief on a level different from that of historical reality. Like the tragic character, the mythic character is designed to generalize the subject; but whereas the tragic character gets his generalizing power from his high rank (ideally, as the functionary of the state, he is a perfect and inclusive type whose fate is inextricably tied to that of his subjects), the mythic character gets his generalizing power from his archetypal nature. The mythic subject typically involves a quest — one that is essentially inner, however externally it may disclose itself. Thus its feeling is neither public in the large and impersonal sense that tragic feeling must be, nor private in the small and domestic sense that comic feeling must be. It is that feeling which comes with an awareness of the cost of insight, the exaction of the human spirit by the terror of truth. The outcome of myth is always mixed; its quest is for an order of the self that is gained at the expense of knowing at last the essential chaos of the universe.

The pure critic or anthropologist might wish to separate myth from its historic base; but in the twentieth century the practicing novelist cannot do so. By his nature, he is not "pure"; and since in the main his imagination is historical, he cannot commit himself seriously to localities, times and subjects that he cannot feel in his bones; therefore the habitation of myth is of great importance to him. In the history of the Western landscape, and in its relation to human character, he may find that habitation, and I know of no other place from which the myth might so richly proceed.

But if the myth is to emerge with some meaning, the novelist must consider the implications of its history.

The history of the West is in some respects the record of its exploitation. Its early exploitation by the Spanish moving up from Mexico was clearly nationalistic, for the open purpose of strengthening an already powerful nation and church. But the American frontiersman, who came from the East through Kentucky and Tennessee and out of St. Louis, was a lone human being who went upon plain and mountain, who subjugated nature on his own terms, and who exploited the land for his own benefit. There was no precise ideological motive for his exploitation, and because of that lack of external motive the adventure became all the more private and intense. Removed from a social structure of some stability, imbued to some degree with a New England-Calvinist-Emersonian tradition that afforded him an abstract view of the nature of his experience, he suddenly found himself in the midst of a few desperate and concrete facts, primary among which was the necessity for survival in a universe whose brutality he had theretofore but dimly suspected. And whether he wished to or not, he was forced to reconsider those ideas he held about the nature of himself and the world in which he lived, ideas that had once, since they sprang from the very social and economic structure they explained, served him quite adequately.

The Western adventure, then, is not really epical; no national force stronger than himself pushed the American frontiersman beyond the bounds of his known experience into the chaos of a new land, into the unknown. His voyage into the wilderness was most meaningfully a voyage into the self, experimental, private and sometimes obscure.

WE MAY now turn to those novelists, whom I mentioned earlier, who have chosen to deal with the Western adventure but who have mistaken the nature of their subject and who have, consciously

Westward

(From "The Long Train-Ride")

With the whole pull of the moon the Plain rises
The low grasses are awash, the prairie undulates like a polyp.

We have been drifting for three days in an open gondola
Westward on the Chicago St. Paul and Pacific railway

with no landmarks visible. 11 p.m. we are cut loose
in the little town of Sturgis N.D., without sound.

No shapes, only a few sheds islanded in a waste of buffalo grass
The pale dirigible of the watertower swims over tin roofs.

A light on in the lunchroom but it is extinguished
as we walk by down the street, looking for the Western Union office.

The clerk is asleep. My father sends home a message
which takes off into the blue night, like a heron.

Bruised by these immense distances the coyote howls.
The wind has died down. Over all the slopes
the wild grasses have begun to move.

Robert Nichols

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or unconsciously, imposed epic strategies upon mythic subjects.

The first (and the best of them) is Walter van Tilburg Clark; the novels with which I am concerned are *The Oxbow Incident* and *The Track of the Cat*. I deal with Clark first in order to get him out of the way, since he has managed to escape the trap into which the others have fallen. He has managed to escape for reasons that may be technically described as accidental, though of course the escape is really a solution and in art there are no accidents. Both of these novels are essentially morality plays, but of a pronounced human subtlety and complexity; and though both make use of the Western landscape, it is not really necessary to either of them. Insofar as these matters can be pinned down, Clark seems to have gathered most of his technical resources from a study of the French novel, particularly the Flaubertian novel, with its concern for locked structure, restrained prose and physical detail raised to symbolic import. Thus, the precisely located scene of his novels is more nearly a necessity demanded by his technique than a genuine use of scene as an aspect of subject. Clark certainly has imposed no epic strategies upon his work, but neither has he availed himself of the Western myth. Which is to say that he is not an essentially *Western* novelist in the sense that I have been using that word. I hardly need to add that there is no reason why he should be.

The Big Sky was A. B. Guthrie's first serious novel, and it remains his best. Guthrie began as a writer of popular fiction, and even in his more serious work he is primarily concerned with the feelings that rise from his subjects rather than with their meanings. In this accidental respect, and on a less intense level, his intention is similar to that of the writer of epic. Moreover, the structure of *The Big Sky* is fundamentally epic; it is sequential, accretive and repetitive, and its primary purpose is to display the epical virtues of physical strength, courage and endurance in its chief characters. But no very vital purpose animates the adventures of the characters; they are flat and typical in the most limited sense of that word; and because of their purposelessness and flatness, the impact of experience upon them is curiously unreal and almost totally visual. We finally see that both plot and character are merely the means whereby we "experience" the landscape, which is the real subject of the novel. This suggests, perhaps, that Guthrie's novel has no true subject. It is an apparatus designed with some elaboration for the rather simple purpose of expressing a few vague and romantic feelings about the land itself. It is unsatisfactory as a work of art; its epical structure and character depiction are irrelevant, if not misleading, since they spring from an imprecise feeling about the subject rather than from an understanding of it. And though a wake of feeling ripples after it, the novel itself is curiously unmemorable.

FREDERICK MANFRED in *Lord Grizzly* displays that ability without which no novelist can long endure—the instinct to choose a good subject. *Lord Grizzly* deals with one of the most potentially rich myths of the West, and one which has the advantage of being firmly embedded in historical fact. It is the story of Hugh Glass, the old hunter who, attacked and terribly wounded by a grizzly, and armed only with a hunting knife, yet manages to slay the bear. Left by his two companions to die, he survives. Without weapons or food, he crawls two hundred miles to take revenge upon the men who abandoned him. Out of history we know that he found them, yet took no revenge; out of myth we reconstruct the meaning he earned which made the exaction of revenge impossible.

But again, upon the mythic subject has been imposed those devices and techniques which derive from the epic intention. Although the structure of *Lord Grizzly* is not so loose and anecdotal as that of *The Big Sky*, it nevertheless has some of that expansiveness and irrelevance of detail endemic to the epic. In the primitive epic, the unused detail is present, we feel, because of a childlike wonder at its mere existence; but in the literary epic, the only kind possible today, the same detail seems ornamental, artificial and strangely jarring. Moreover, Manfred has chosen a rhetoric derived from the Homeric epic, the Old Testament and folk speech which tends to inflate the subject where it needs constriction and to deflate it where it needs elevation —a rhetoric, in short, which falsifies the subject. Only occasionally does the detail manage to emerge genuinely from the style; but when it does, we can measure the loss achieved by Manfred's choice of certain epical techniques which, imposed upon an unwilling detail, falsify the value of the subject rather than reveal and judge it for what it might be.

It is not surprising that the commercial exploiters of the Western theme have so mistaken the nature of their subject that, unaware, they have imposed upon it a fundamentally alien New England-Calvinistic world view; it is both surprising and disturbing that such talented novelists as Guthrie and Manfred have made a parallel mistake about the nature and implications of their subjects.

The nineteenth- and early twentieth-century adventure of the American West is essentially mythic. It is not tragic; there is no order to be disturbed, its heroes are not of high rank, and the feeling that emerges from the adventure is not public, in the tragic sense of the word. It is not comic: no elaborate social structure furnishes the details of manners, and the difficulties are neither slight nor trivial. Nor is it epic. Except in the Indian wars, its field of action is neither nationalistic nor political.

The mythic subject is one that has not yet found its proper form. I believe that the most usable and authentic

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myth available to us may be discovered in the adventure of the American West. Viewed in a certain way, the American frontiersman—whether he was hunter, guide, scout, explorer or adventurer—becomes an archetypal figure, and begins to extend beyond his location in history. He is nineteenth-century man moving into the twentieth century; he is European man moving into a new continent; he is man moving into the unknown, into potentiality, and by that move profoundly changing his own nature. He and the land into which he moves may have their counterparts in both *Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight* and in *Moby Dick*—which is to say that, though the myth which embodies him has its locality and time, it is confined by neither. He walks in his time and through his adventure, out of history and into myth. He is an adventurer in chaos, searching for meaning there. He is, in short, ourselves.

Tragedy of Ugliness

SINCLAIR LEWIS. By Mark Schorer. McGraw-Hill. 867 pp. $10.

Kenneth Rexroth

THIS IS the best literary biography by an American since Matthew Josephson's *Zola and His Times*. I only hope they put it in the moving pictures and Mark Schorer and the Lewis estate make as much money as was made on Paul Muni's *Zola*. But who would play Sinclair Lewis? Lee Tracy played him once, in a picture about Dorothy Thompson and Lewis in Russia which was almost as funny as *Ninotchka*. It is a pity George Arliss is dead — there is just enough resemblance to assimilate Red Lewis to Disraeli and Richelieu and the rest of that handful of historical great figures my generation grew up believing all looked practically alike, give or take a little putty and grease paint. It would be an unsavory role, and the make-up job would be formidable. He was an ugly man, Lewis, physically, mentally, morally. That is the great overriding subject of Schorer's biography — ugliness. Other tragic flaws have made other tragedies down the long history of literature — pride in the Greeks, anger in Lear, lust, accidie, even gluttony. I wonder if Mark Schorer is completely aware that he has written a great tragedy which springs almost wholly from the fact that its hero had the aesthetic appeal of a scorbutic rhinoceros . . . and knew it only too well.

Reviewers have seen fit to laugh at Schorer's incredible mass of detail — "the four cords of wood that Dr. Lewis asked his son to chop on February 23, 1903, were really 4¾ cords." But this sort of thing is precisely what makes the cheese so binding. Given all the Lewis papers and nine years for work, Mark Schorer, an anti-naturalist as far as his own taste is concerned, has chosen to erect a Great Pyramid of naturalism as a monument to a flimsy, provincial and tragic successor to Zola. Here is one place where hypertrophy itself becomes a discipline. The effect is stunning, practically stupefying. It is also convincing, and more than that, interesting. These are qualities I do not find in Lewis himself. Except for the purposes of my own education as a critic, I find Lewis' novels utterly unreadable. Forgive me for laboring the point, but I am actively unsympathetic to Lewis' literary theories, and I find his lack of style revolting, his plots put together with pins and his characters cut out of paper. (I am not an anti-naturalist: I think Dreiser one of the few genuine stylists of the first quarter of the century in this country.) Furthermore, I don't agree with Mark Schorer's critical ideas as they have been revealed in his previous books. In other words, I was a bad choice for this review. But I think the book is extremely important and even more absorbing reading than it is important.

Lewis' career raises the whole problem of alienation in America. Who is alienated from what? France is a country with twenty aborted revolutions in two centuries. Sade, Rousseau, Laclos, Restif, all started out alienated and by the time two generations of barricades had risen and fallen, Baudelaire was a man at cross-purposes with his society at every point. Salinger, Mailer or Ginsberg, these people have disaffiliated themselves from a world hellbent on destroying itself. The Dadaists exhibited loaded revolvers pointed out of picture frames, a string tied to the trigger and a card, *"TIREZ, S.V.P."* It is a commonplace of American criticism that Lewis was part and parcel of the world of George Folansbee Babbitt and Gopher Prairie, but that is not what I am getting at. Rabelais, Aretino, Machiavelli, Swift, even G. K. Chesterton, all satirists must necessarily be part of the world they satirize. It's something more fundamental.

Elmer Gantry is really the only work of satire Lewis wrote. It is, incidentally, the only one which seems to have shocked just about everybody. It is a farce, a charade, an angry explosion of stereotypes. Yet it has a kind of justice; and it has humor, more humor than Lewis ever showed before or after. The other books are mostly mediocre representatives of a century-long movement that has been dignified with all sorts of critical metaphysics, but which is really the movement of provincials struggling to deprovincialize themselves. Perhaps that is why the leaders have been Sicilians, Norwegians, Middle Western Americans. Trollope didn't give a damn whether he was provincial or not. Neither did Wells; he had bigger fish to fry. But the really shocking thing about Shaw is that he did — his wing collar never ceased to abrade his neck.

I don't remember what happened to Carol Kennicott — but I know what happened to Norah when she left the Doll's House: she went to the city and got a job. Lewis fought his lower-middle-class background with nothing but his nerves, and when he broke loose he had nowhere to go but to Harry's Bar.

I KNOW I sound like an old-time *New Masses* critic. They were always taking the social critics of their day to task and urging them to join up—"take a positive stand." Pasting stamps in a party book or getting socked on the picket line was not the solution, but in a sense they were right. You can't just go nowhere. It is horrifying to read about Lewis in his old age hanging around the Doni, Leland's Bar, Harry's Bar, the Via Vittoria Veneto, with all the other witless victims of Momism. Satire may be a method of constructing a system of values; that is, the satirist may not start out in a very well-organized fashion. But eventually all great comedy comes from the solidest wisdom and the firmest personal base. Lewis' rejection of the America of his day seems almost unmotivated — the only clear motivation was his bad complexion. He was uncomfortable when asked out.

The saddest part of the book is the story of his marriage to Dorothy Thompson. Doubtless she was the very archetype of the American Mom on the rampage — but he knew that when he married her. That's what he wanted and that is what he always pretended he got. But he didn't. For years the poor

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KENNETH REXROTH is a frequent Nation *contributor.*

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woman tried her best to be a wife. It is heart-rending to watch this middle-aged career girl struggling to love, honor and obey a man who is interested only in hitting Mom over the head with his bottle of formula.

The tragedy of Lewis is not the tragedy of a writer at odds with his society, it is not the tragedy of one alienated, it is not even the tragedy of a self-educated provincial on the make. It is part of the vast tragedy of male and female in America, the dislocation of function and responsibility which has baffled and frightened all outside observers, and some natives, from Tocqueville to the present.

Between the Real and the Absurd

A NEW LIFE. By Bernard Malamud. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. 367 pp. $4.95.

Saul Maloff

BERNARD MALAMUD'S voice is the most distinctive in contemporary American fiction; and it is a wholly created one, a thing entirely of art. The point is worth making if for no other reason than that it is too often said, usually by implication, that he is a "Jewish" writer, as if he were an American Sholom Aleichem or Peretz, writing in a kind of broken English—charming certainly, but rather quaint, primitive, ascertainably derivative. Malamud has often in the past gone to the sources of Jewish humor and Yiddish syntax. But he appropriates the one into the marvels of his own mystic and melancholy joyousness, and transforms the other into the strategies and rhythms of his original and cunning language by a peculiar wit (which at its best amounts to a crazy recklessness, suicidal for most writers), by a very special intuitiveness and purity of feeling. It would be merely sentimental and pious to suggest that those qualities of his work (following *The Natural*) which have been so steadily remarked upon—the pity and tenderness, the compassion and love, as in *The Assistant* and many of the stories in *The Magic Barrel*—are Jewish properties and that the writer who possesses and conveys them is, therefore, a Jewish writer. They do not in themselves make for art; without art they may, indeed, only suffocate; and Malamud, whose instinct is for that center of passion where feeling is most exacerbated, is almost always in absolute control of his difficult art, though he takes the greatest risks in creating his rarefied atmosphere.

"Levitation," in fact, is one of his favorite words. In that thin air between natural earth and outer space everything is permitted, all rules are suspended, but only so long as the artist can keep his characters there by their own centrifugal force. If we say that Malamud's world is like no other, it is because the world he creates occupies the air exactly between the real and the absurd, where only saints and lunatics are, and where the right gesture—of movement, of language, of syntax, of metaphor—can save one's life, or some other.

UNTIL NOW, Malamud has chosen for his scene some closed, intense space and totally filled it with his characters, recording how they give it meaning: the sad grocery store cut off from all light save that cast by the people in it; the desolate cold-water flat, filled with grace; the stark tenement room in the glare of a single bulb, suddenly become reverberant with strange beauty and significance.

Now, in *A New Life,* Malamud begins by giving us a character whom we recognize at once, despite the disguise: "S. Levin, formerly a drunkard.... Bearded, fatigued, lonely..." getting off the train "after a long and tiring transcontinental journey" to teach courses in freshman composition in the small state-college town of Marathon, Cascadia, a state very like Oregon. (I was surprised to notice, rereading his earlier books, that Malamud's characters there did not wear beards; I could have sworn they all did.) Casting off New York City, the scene of his defeat and ruin and mysterious past (a burlesque of wretched misery), a failure, disappointed in love, doomed always to re-enact his life's disasters, Levin has come as far as he can in the desperate, now-or-never, last-chance hope of a new life. To the end of the land, to the end of the world, this bearded Jew, aged thirty, who had never before been west of New Jersey, comes to this wholly alien territory of remote small-town America—only to experience there

SAUL MALOFF, on leave from the faculty of literature at the University of Puerto Rico, is lecturing this year at New York University and The New School for Social Research.

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another series of defeats; and, out of them, an equivocal triumph.

What Levin discovers is nothing less than America—discovers it in the sense that Columbus discovered it. Indeed, as he responds to unexplored possibilities, Levin *creates* America, as though it had had no previous existence. From the irony inherent in the encounter between this "upstart schmo" with his "city-built nose," this Natty Bumppo from the ghetto, and the green new world that has never seen the likes of him before, Malamud gets his most exquisite effects and resonant meanings. Moving between the closed room of his private despair and the wide and open world around him, opposing with his innocence and wisdom the apathy and guile of the institution, the college, Levin learns and judges the human meaning and moral value of his experience against the double perspective of his marginal position. And this world, taken by surprise, finds in him its true discoverer — this Chingachgook (the Cooper allusions are his), sniffing out the forest with his sharpest, long-dormant senses.

WHO BUT a trespasser knows the real value of a forest? Always, amid the beauty, amid the life he discovers, Levin has the other awareness of himself as trespasser; a Jew and an intellectual (as if being one were not bad enough) among the Philistines. "Being where he was not supposed to be," Levin forever expects "if not a boot in the pants, at least the forester's hand and gruff get the hell off this property. He would run like mad."

He does not run. Instead, he discovers the seasons and weathers, trees and flowers, the kinds of sky. Instead, ludicrously equipped with guidebooks and binoculars, he spots a red-headed woodpecker, "never before seen so clearly"; instead, he improbably meets his woman in the forest and makes love to her there for the first time. What results from all these encounters—human, institutional, natural—is some of the best landscape and nature writing in a long time; some of the most sensitive and joyous writing about women and sexual love I know; and certainly the deftest, most delicious satire of the cynicism and stupidity of the academy in the whole of that thriving literary industry.

Levin's reformist zeal, his Messianic fervor, is defeated on ground inhospitable to it, is defeated by the organization men, who understand the resources of *Realpolitik*, as saints notoriously do not. But in defeat he wins the important knowledge, the oldest wisdom: that "happiness is the grace settled on the spirit in desire of life," that freedom is an assertion of will, and that love is visited upon those who are prepared, who have prepared themselves, for it, and can give it.

For Levin, to whom "neither cold cash nor true love" comes easily, it can only end with ironic, though none the less real, triumph. In the marvelous last scene, he is barreling down the road with his pregnant love and her two germ-ridden offspring, several valises and an old duffel bag in the rear of his broken-down car, bound for the Golden West and whatever life holds in store for him. Still an alien, still an outcast, still trespassing (though now in familiar country, appropriated through the discovery of love), he is a victim no longer. When his love's outraged husband (in love with normal distributions and the final truth of graphs—the administrator nonpareil of freshman composition programs) asks him, all unbelieving, why he is taking upon himself these harrowing new woes, Levin (now, reborn, Sam, a new name for a new life) cries out: "Because I can, you son-of-a-bitch." And by the enabling act of love, freely given and freely taker, he can. Though the car may very well break down before they get to where they are going.

The Hero and His War

GOODBYE TO SOME. By Gordon Forbes. W. W. Norton. 288 pp. $3.95.

THE END OF IT. By Mitchell Goodman. Horizon Press. 285 pp. $4.50.

CATCH-22. By Joseph Heller. Simon & Schuster. 443 pp. $5.95.

NIGHT. By Francis Pollini. Houghton Mifflin. 305 pp. $3.95.

Melvin Seiden

BY CALLING his epic novel *War and Peace,* Tolstoy meant to suggest the indivisibility of man's rhythmical history of creation and destruction, birth and death, babies and bombs. We persist, though, in speaking of "the war novel" as if there also existed an absurdity that might be called "a peace novel." A novelist's subject cannot be war but must be human beings living and dying. War is only a special set of circumstances in which people live and die; circumstances, moreover, which can have meaning only in the context in which people live and die without trying to kill one another. Clearly it is futile to speak of a kind of novel which is not a kind at all but owes its designation to its *scene*: war.

In the *Iliad,* the first and greatest war novel, the special importance of war as a setting is clear. War's abnormalities provide the best possible opportunity for putting to the test, discovering, defining, exalting or debunking the special and rare excellence of character that goes by the name of heroism. True, Homer devotes many hundreds of lines to the cinematic purpose of capturing war as war, the glory and terror of battle; but this we either admire for its descriptive power or pass over impatiently as filling and backing. For the modern reader it is Achilles' tragedy of initiation into manhood and degradation that ought to have been Homer's story.

There is also a sense in which novels that use war as an occasion to search for the hero are bound to seem like so many footnotes to the *Iliad.* This observation is not prompted by patronizing classicism: one simply recalls Achilles' dilemma—to live a long, undistinguished, tame life or a hot, glorious, heroic and therefore short one—and recognizes that the novelist who goes stalking the hero on the battlefield cannot escape the implications of this dilemma any more than Achilles could avoid being gored on one of its horns.

IN ONE way or another four recent works are war novels in search of a hero. *Catch-22* is by far the best of the four, and the most militantly anti-heroic: its comedy, fantastically inventive, controlled, patterned and structured even when it seems all wild improvisation and top-that-one-if-you-can surrealism, is one long, bludgeoning attack on the hero, or what little was left of him in the tradition of twentieth-century fiction before Heller's demented fliers came along.

Heller does not try to dissolve the Achilles dilemma in the way that so much of the literature of anti-heroism does. He does not say, "Nonsense. It's a false and artificial choice. Everyone knows there are others." On the con-

MELVIN SEIDEN, who teaches at Harpur College, Binghamton, New York, is a contributor to The London Magazine, Dissent, The Carleton Miscellany *and other literary journals.*

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trary. Heller's nuthouse comedy and grotesque tragedy are dedicated to the Falstaffian proposition that it's better to be a live coward than a dead hero.

IN Gordon Forbes's novel, Lt. Tommy Prime is the genuine Achillean article, Hotspur in an airplane, mad for thrills, glory and death, all of which he achieves by flying sorties with outrageous absurdity. He fights as he plays poker: to win because there's something in it for *him*. Prime is neither more nor less important than any of the other men (and there are a few dozen minor characters of about equal importance) in *Goodbye to Some*. However, his demented heroism defines the hero's unsaintly, temperate, equable sanity. Lt. Carl Iverson is neither hero nor anti-hero. He is the man who sticks with a dirty job until it's done or he has got himself killed. He is the man who endures because he is thoroughly flexible. Today he may have a bad case of the shakes, but tomorrow he'll come through.

His virtues and vices are of manageable intensity. He survives because he is not blinded by passion or fanaticism, not overspecialized or emotionally muscle-bound by the overdevelopment of some fatal idiosyncrasy. Without allegorizing or symbolizing, Forbes makes his hero a genuine and credible representative of the nice, competent guy in all his unexciting universality. It is not surprising, therefore, that as a whole *Goodbye to Some* is the kind of competent, workmanlike novel that is bound to be passed over for more flamboyant performances like that of *Catch-22*. It's too bad. English critics are always praising the American novel for its ability to deal with men at work, and that is the controlling idea of Forbes's novel: flying airplanes in war as work to be well done since it must be done. This is another version of "the Protestant ethic," but no honest reader is likely to come away from *Goodbye to Some* sneering at it.

THE END OF IT will be called an anti-war novel. It wears its sensitivity on its sleeve, is written in a spare style that is meant to mean more than it says.

> This country of soft hills and jagged mountains, with pink and brown plaster houses on the flat, is the Abruzzi. It is nearly spring. A few birds sing.

One does not know whether to describe the hero, Gil Freeman, as an allegorical abstraction or an eponym who gives his name to all those humane values Mr. Goodman is so eager to praise. Setting, scenery, place — Italy in all its beauty and vitality — so dominate the novelist's imagination that the effect is the reverse of pathetic fallacy. Instead of nature mirroring and expressing the mind and heart of the American soldier whose love affair with Italy (and by symbolic association, with humanity) is Goodman's theme, the eponymous Lt. Freeman comes to be a mere adjunct to the scene:

> It was a journey, in search of a place that was dimly known to him and in this place he would meet and know this other man who was also himself, who would emerge to meet him.
>
> Many were dead, but he was not dead.

The trouble with *The End of It* is not that it is a bad novel but that it is not a novel at all. It is a long prose poem, a static meditation on Italy during World War II, a book which, for all its modesty, is a thoroughly narcissistic performance. Mr. Goodman is not

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interested in the war in Italy, he wants to meditate on that war; he is not interested in idiosyncratic men and women, but only in Humanity.

WHAT is worse, that gloriously complex, fundamental, inescapable condition of existence that Aristotle called simply "action," the poet-novelist uses only as a window-dressing to spice up a long prose lyric pretending to be a novel. The book opens with a love affair between Freeman-everyman-goodman and Italian Woman that couldn't be deader and more symbolically obtrusive if Bunyan himself had written it. The book reaches its climax in an episode in which Lt. Freeman becomes a party to what he mistakenly believes is the anti-German savagery of the Italian partisans with whom he is working as a forward observer in the artillery, only to discover that he has used his skill to wipe out a group of defenseless Italian prisoners being held by the Germans. His guilt induces predictable mental collapse, out of which, inevitably, the new and truly free Freeman is reborn, a phoenix of humanity.

The slaughter of the innocents is pap to satisfy the corrupt taste of novel readers — that is what is wrong with this falsely dramatic climax to a static book. What Mr. Goodman really believes in is what he has been talking about — the life-giving powers of Italy, the immorality of the American war machine as a "Corporation," the innate decency of G.I. Joe. The bang-up dramatic ending lacks conviction, coming as it does at the end of a novel which does not want to be a novel and serving with such pat symbolic servility to advance the grand theme to its all but inevitable life-affirming conclusion.

Early in the novel, a minor character, a General Batchelor ("The Boss") appears, delivers an electrifying speech, then disappears, never to be heard from again. For three or four pages the novel is alive. Startlingly so. It is odd. This is a gentle book and Mr. Goodman's contemplative prose is, on the whole, gentle. But the General's speech is sandpaper, filth and maniacal American baroque rhetoric.

If Goodman had written that speech, one would have every reason to believe that he is deceived about his own talents. The fact is that Goodman's General's words are the late General Patton's own words. Almost verbatim, Goodman has used an infamous Patton speech (printed originally in Dwight Macdonald's *Politics* and reprinted later in the essay, "My Favorite General" in *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*). The temptation to hypothesize about Goodman's intentions is strong. What did he think he was doing? More important, did he face the awkward question of what the innocent reader is bound to have thought he must have been doing? Or, if one is meant to identify the speech as Patton's (who doesn't read Macdonald?), did the novelist suspect that, after recognizing the true speaker, the reader might go on to make an invidious comparison between Patton's brilliantly scabrous prose—which reflects, Macdonald says, "atrocities of the mind" — and Goodman's, which seems limp and pale in the company it keeps so briefly? Lacking answers to these questions, one must insist that, whatever the novelist's intentions may have been, this falling back on the brute power of Patton's own words is evidence of a significant failure of imagination. It takes a novelist to create men who are alive in the way that General Patton is alive in his speech and Lt. Freeman is not, anywhere in the book. Goodman's lyrical talent is not that of the novelist; but

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In the Night Fields

I heard the sparrows shouting "Eat, eat,"
And then the day dragged its carcass in back of the hill.
Slowly the tracks darkened.

The smoke rose steadily from no fires.
The old hunger, left in the old darkness,
Turned like a hanged knife.
I would have preferred a quiet life.
The bugs of regret began their services
Using my spine as a rosary. I left the maps
For the spiders.
Let's go, I said.

Light of the heart,
The wheat had started lighting its lanterns,
And in every house in heaven there were lights waving
Hello good-bye. But that's
Another life.
Snug on the crumbling earth
The old bottles lay dreaming of new wine.
I picked up my breast, which had gone out.
By other lights I go looking for yours

Through the standing harvest of my lost arrows.
(Never again. Never again.) Under the moon
The shadow practices mowing. Not for me, I say,
Please not for my
Benefit. A man cannot live by bread
Alone.

W. S. Merwin

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in our time the writer, unless he is a confirmed poet, inevitably turns to the novel. Similarly, in 1607, the poet George Chapman, with hardly any dramatic gift, turned his hand to plays.

THE HEROES of *Catch-22*, *Goodbye to Some* and *The End of It* survive the Second World War. The hero of *Night*, which is set in the Korean War, commits suicide by drowning after having gone through torments of "brain-washing" in a Chinese prisoner of war camp.

The implications of this suicide are curious. In *Night* there is an angry, militant American prisoner named Phillips. Like Forbes's Tommy Prime, he is engaged in a quixotic one-man crusade; his, however, against the enemy within, the "Progressives" who have shamelessly capitulated to the Reds. Until the suicide of Sgt. Marty Landi, one had supposed that his grim, stubborn, unheroic resistance to the Reds represented an admirable and workable compromise between the craven bestiality of the "Progressives" and the monomania of Phillips' almost Calvinist fanaticism. What then does it mean when the man who is neither hero nor antihero destroys himself after having demonstrated that he is what is apparently better than either: a decent, sane, human being? If Pollini wants us to understand this enigma, he offers no guide lines to help us.

Pollini's prose is nervous, cryptic, tough and unvaryingly agitated. It is fatiguing without being exciting. Sgt. Landi is credible enough, but ultimately his authenticity obliges the author to make believable and even comprehensible the soldier's Chinese tormentor, Ching. Ching is the descendant of Koestler's Glotkin and Orwell's O'Brien, but for all the cleverness of his Marxianizing apologetics, he remains another inscrutable Oriental villain.

Eugene Kinkead's *New Yorker* articles (which later appeared as a book, *In Every War But One*) are not only more credible than Pollini's account of Korean prisoners of war; they are more moving. Here, sensitive journalism captures another kind of "atrocity of the mind" more vividly than an undistinguished but surely not untalented novelist is able to render.

Ways of Telling It

CLOCK WITHOUT HANDS. By Carson McCullers. Houghton Mifflin. 241 pp. $4.

FALSE ENTRY. By Hortense Calisher. Little, Brown. 484 pp. $5.75.

Jean Martin

EVER SINCE Mrs. Gaskell did her little water-color sketch of daily life in Cranford, lady writers have been pursuing, each in her own gentle way, the grander traditions of male writing. *Ars Celare Artem* ("It is true art to conceal art") is the banner of one tradition—the purer, more stringent one which prefers the simple declarative sentence that pares away externals and exposes life in crystalline form. *Ars Longa, Vita Brevis* ("Art is long, life is short") declares the other school for whom the telling of the story is all, for whom the meaning lies concealed in the form, flow and embroidery of words. There used to be a theory that each style had its cycle—that a period of fancy prose alternated with a reaction to it in the form of simple writing, and that these alternations of writing styles were linked in some way to the "times." But McCullers and Calisher, writing cheek by jowl, are good examples of novelists who explore the two veins of literary style. Although both books have small Southern towns as their backgrounds, although both were written by Southern lady-novelists, *False Entry* and *Clock without Hands* are at opposite ends of the artistic rainbow. Which you prefer is entirely a matter of taste and temperament. As far as merit goes, each is as good as the other in its own way, for who cares to pass judgment on the excellence of blue versus red?

Hortense Calisher's book will be much admired by the *cognoscente*. It carries forward the Jamesian tradition of rococo writing filigreed over hair-splitting thought, so that the breaking of a promise becomes equivalent to the shattering of a mountain. In Calisher the art lies in all that she puts into a sentence. From a glittering vocabulary she chooses words that bejewel the tiara of sentence structure: "I see truth," she says, "as an old, hobbled unicorn limping through the forests of allegation and denial, pausing here and there to try to warm itself at some sun-foil of proof that shines for a moment through the trees. . . ." With Calisher, life lies underneath the sentence and the art decorates the top.

IN Carson McCullers the art has been concealed below the sentence structure so that life lies exposed on top. She is an arch practitioner of the craft of leaving things out. Her skill lies in knowing many words, many similes, but choosing to throw away all but the most pertinent. Where Calisher bestows a half-dozen glittering phrases, McCullers eliminates all but the precise, simple one that holds the essence of her thought.

Clock without Hands tells of a man waiting for death who sees the world through new-washed eyes—in this case the wildly funny, mildly evil world of a small Southern town. In its effortless

JEAN MARTIN is a Chicago critic whose reviews appear frequently in the Sun-Times.

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dialogue, when it clicks, the book displays McCullers attaining to a state of writing grace: "You have to be mighty careful about skitzes these days," Sherman Pew, the blue-eyed Negro explains to Jester Clane, the judge's sheltered son. "About what?" Jester asked, feeling somewhat at a loss. "That means schizophrenics." "But isn't that a medical disease?" "No, mental," said Sherman with authority, "a skitz is a crazy person. I actually knew one . . . he was a golden Nigerian." "A golden what?" "That's a club . . . protesting against racial discrimination and with the very highest aims . . . first we registered for the vote in a body and if you don't think that takes nerve in this county you don't know nothing. Each member got a little cardboard coffin with his name in it and a printed sign, 'A voting reminder' . . . that actually happened." ". . . I have often thought," remarked Jester who had read the idea somewhere, "that if Christ were born now he would be colored." "Well, he wasn't." "I'm afraid if I were a Nigerian or colored I would be neurotic. Awfully neurotic." "No you wouldn't . . . a neurotic nigger is a dead nigger." These discussions between Jester and Sherman sparkle with a Tom Sawyer humor although, unfortunately, the book's total message remains suspended.

From the standpoint of its author, *Clock without Hands* is a step forward, a success, for it eschews the pointed and labored allegory of her earlier works and the frequently trumped-up Southern characters have now been blended happily into a believable story level. Carson McCullers has always been a writer's writer; darling of the "Southern group," lavishly praised by Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, et al., visited by Françoise Sagan on her recent tour of the American beaches. McCullers is reputed to be considered by Europeans as our best American novelist. From the viewpoint of her fellow writers, McCullers' outstanding quality is courage. Ever since she produced *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* at twenty-two, she has had to write with the albatross of reputation hung around her neck and the thumping signboard of "genius" staring her in the teeth. That she has managed to grow in the face of this has taken guts. *Clock without Hands* is warm, funny and readable; its point may not quite click, but the writing is quietly superb.

CALISHER'S exquisite art is of a totally different genre and calls for a different reader, one whose pride in his understanding of the writing craft makes up a large part of his pleasure in reading. Those more simple readers who are out for a story will here miss the point. That the moral crises involved in the story are very small potatoes is unimportant; the telling is all.

False Entry is the recounting of the interior drama of a man who makes false entry into people's present lives by abusing information about their past which he has gleaned obliquely and illicitly and which he retains by virtue of a labyrinthine memory. By this peculiar form of intellectual dishonesty he violates his own integrity of self; and of this inner, intense drama Calisher's telling is acidulous, incisive, intricate and fiendishly intelligent.

Without laboring the point too finely, the contrast between McCullers and Calisher may be said to be more than a choice between the two writing styles. "Style is the man," and what is involved here is the more basic choice of whether you put art first, or life. McCullers makes life prime, art its tool; Calisher would probably admit that art is not superior to life, but she prefers it anyway.

The Balls

(from Christian Morgenstern's *Palmström*)

Palmström takes paper out of his drawer.
And allots it artfully around the floor.

And after, each he balls up tight.
And allots it artfully, and at night.

And allots each ball just so (at night),
that he, if at night he starts upright,

that he, if he starts up at night, the balls'
crinkle hears and's thrilld by secret crawly

raps (for at night's thrilld by secret crawly
raps) by the Spook of wrapperpaper balls.

Jess Collins

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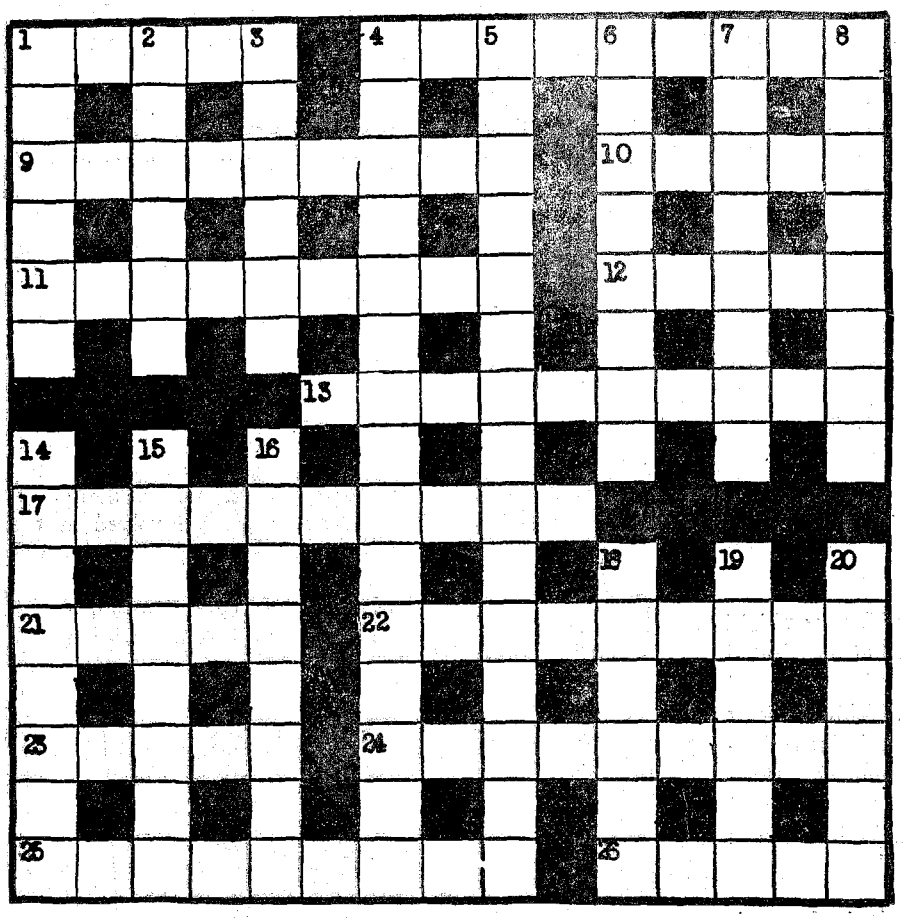
Crossword Puzzle No. 937

By FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS:

1 Notes the time of fruit? (5)
4 This should find us in the marked condition of being held up. (9)
9 Appearing more or less continuously as a true apple turnover. (9)
10 It might be one side of an essayist. (5)
11 Fields used to mention his little one. (9)
12 An iceberg is said to do so like a former opera star. (5)
13 Kelly and Titanic? (10)
17 Certainly not a French loaf—which makes it rather sad, brother! (10)
21 A sort of bridge, or a sort of island? (5)
22 Master and shopkeeper, possibly. (10)
23 Was he bound to act like a wheel?
24 No longer a single price, it is clear. (9)
25 Everything in the supporting structure implies a beau geste. (9)
26 A little bit of sense? (5)

DOWN:

1 Picture of what the conquerors of early Britain tried to do to the country? (6)
2 A high spot free of one zone, possible. (6)
3 He is caught in the sort of kiss that makes for fascinating men, reputedly. (6)
4 Very logical, the place of privacy! (That's an order!) (5, 3, 7)
5 Is an autobiography likely to be? (4-11)
6 A fish or a cable. (8)
7 A tatted tie would hardly qualify as one. (8)
8 Suede's an awkward material for an entertainer's make-up. (8)
14 Trying to be like clever speech? (8)
15 States in original fashion thus? (8)
16 She was a loser-out, because she made a pick-up. (8)
18 No naval commander likes to go down in it. (6)
19 Spots made by the unctuous. (6)
20 Stick out there? Not likely! (6)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 936

ACROSS: 1 and 11 Kick over the traces; 5 Stance; 10 Dumas; 12 Air lane; 13 Onagers; 14 Impede; 15 Trooped; 18 Canteen; 21 Barrow; 24 Warring; 26 and 20 down Arabian Nights; 27 Inflected; 28 Elate; 29 Guests; 30 Editress. DOWN: 1 Kodiak; 2 Cameraman; 3 On stage; 4 Esthete; 6 Tornado; 7 Niche; 8 East Side; 9 Decoct; 16 Proximate; 17 Scowling; 19 Exigent; 21 Braided; 22 Reagent; 23 Insets; 25 Rifle.

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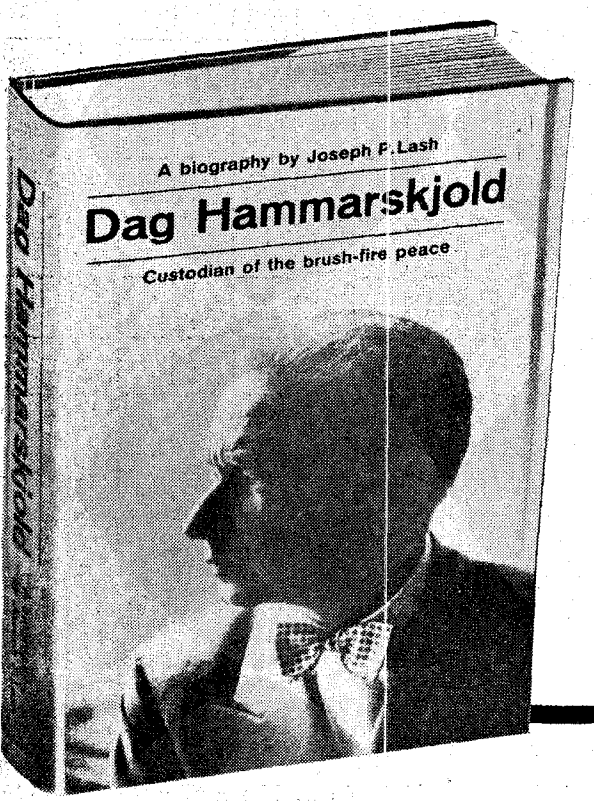

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